HB

C. L. Schmeiser
4877 Orchard Lane
Rockford, Illinois

ONE HUNDRED GREAT TEXTS AND THEIR TREATMENT

TEXTS, ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT BY NOTED PREACHERS AND ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS

INCLUDING

SERMON SUGGESTIONS FOR GENERAL AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS—THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR'S, EASTER, MEMORIAL DAY, MOTHER'S DAY, CHILDREN'S DAY, BACCALAUREATE, ETC.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER
BY REV. CHARLES H. PARKHURST, D.D.

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FOREWORD

This volume will be a mental stimulant to the reader who uses it in the spirit in which it was prepared. If swallowed whole it may cause indigestion. If used in reasonable quantities, and with the bread of your own labor and experience, it will sharpen and also help satisfy your appetite for sermon preparation. And if you enjoy the preparation of your sermons, your congregations will enjoy hearing them.

If after choosing your text or your subject, and having set forth what is in your own larder, you find what Great Texts has to offer, what other preachers of note have done, you can cry with the prophet, "Come, eat!"

Or to use another simile—If you have gotten all your sermon building material together, and you find that it will make only a two-room house, then you may go to Great Texts and get material to add other rooms. The plans of other preachers will help you plan yours. The illustrations will help you put in more windows that will let in more light and more heat.

The man who is entirely original is a new order of creation. The greater a genius the greater his indebtedness to the knowledge of those who have gone before. The man who profits not by the wisdom of others is a willful child who must have his fingers burned before he will believe a stove is hot.

This obligation of one to another is best set forth by Spurgeon, who certainly was the peer of preachers of his own time if not of all time. He says:

"Paul had a few books, which were left perhaps wrapped up in the cloak, and Timothy was to be careful to bring them. Even an apostle must read. Some of our self-sufficient brethren have thought a minister who reads books and studies his sermon must be a very deplorable specimen of a preacher. A man who goes up into the pulpit, professes to take his text on the spot, and talk any quantity of nonsense, is the idol of many. If he will speak without premeditation, or pretend to do so, and never produce what they call a dish of dead man's brain—ah! that is the preacher. How rebuked are they by the apostle! He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching for thirty years, and yet he wants books! He has seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He has a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the very heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, and yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books! The apostle says to Timothy, and so he says to every preacher, 'Give thyself unto reading.' The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted; he who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people—you need to read."—C. H. Spurgeon.

FREDERICK BARTON

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PULPIT AIMS.

By Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D., LL.D.

Lecturing is not preaching. The functions pertaining to the platform and the pulpit are distinct; or if to some degree they seem to coalesce, their purposes are distinct. If they do not always appear so it is because the platform is sometimes removed from the public hall and set up in a sanctuary in place of the pulpit which has been taken down and moved out.

Socrates was not satisfied to be a lecturer; he wanted to be more than a lecturer and to be a preacher. If he had been contented to be a lecturer he would have been allowed to live. But as he insisted on preaching, the Athenians fell back from him and gave him hemlock tea.

Aristotle was not satisfied to be a lecturer. He, too, wanted to be more than a lecturer and to preach. If he had been contented to lecture he might have remained at Athens, but as he insisted on preaching, although he was not executed as Socrates was, he found it convenient to remove from Athens.

Formerly, then, preaching was a dangerous profession. It was sometimes so in old Hebrew times. John the Baptist maintained himself in his pulpit for a time with unabated popularity, but in one lucky, or unlucky, moment, he delivered a short discourse that was rather more evidently and pointedly applicable than usual and he lost not only his pulpit but his head. That might have occurred before if the parish to which he preached had had the same power over life and death that was possessed by the king who executed him.

Jesus Christ never lectured. What he said, so far as it has been preserved to us, was distinctly sermon. His pastorate lasted about three years. He was crucified for being a homiletical irritation, nuisance, if you please. There are ministers in New York who have stood in the pulpit ten times as many years as Christ preached in Judea, Samaria and Galilee, and yet apparently without a desire that they should be crucified, except perhaps on the part of a very limited number.

Not long after, Stephen, the proto-martyr, was stoned. His pastorate was only a brief one. So far as we are informed, he preached but once; but it was preaching. The earlier part of the discourse was rather after the lecture order—historical, and the Jews were always fond of history, that is to say the records of their own people. The lecture portion had continued for quite a long time before the hearers began to sense its drift. Fifty verses out of the fifty-six were spent in lifting the hammer before bringing it down on to the nail, but when it reached the nail there was howling and teeth-gnashing, and the only reply they could make was to throw stones at him, till, as the records say, "he fell asleep."

It is an interesting incident of that same scene that Saul was there who afterwards became Paul. He heard the sermon; probably he saw

the hammer, the nail, the stones and the death. Without that sermon there might have been no Paul. Preaching that has hammer and nails in it and that hurts was, at that time, the kind of discourse that preachers preached. A man who is in a dead sleep cannot be awakened by sprinkling him with lavender water.

Then as to the Twelve Apostles, tradition has it that all of them but one died a violent death. That was because they did not attempt to discharge their apostolic functions by lecturing, but by preaching. They went about it affectionately, as did Stephen. No man ever preached with a tenderer, sweeter spirit than did Stephen. His last words were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," gentle and forgiving even in death agony. And yet he worked with hammer and nail.

But to go back a little, and indicate by reference to Socrates, Aristotle and others what it is that distinguishes preaching from lecturing and that makes preaching to be preaching.

John Stuart Blackie, of the University of Edinburgh, was setting forth the character of Socrates as a preacher and at the same time indicating the difference between that and lecturing when he said:

"If the speaker has a real vocation to address his fellowmen on moral subjects, and if he does not dwell in vague and trivial generalities, sounding very pious on Sunday, but having no distinct and recognizable reference to the secular business of Monday, then a good sermon may be compared to a discharge of moral electricity which will arouse many sleepers, or to the setting up a sure finger-post which will direct many wanderers."

Therein lies the difference between Socrates and the sophists. The sophists talked for the sake of talking; argued for the sake of arguing; and when they were through arguing and talking, things were just where they were before, their audience unchanged, and they themselves in no slightest danger of crucifixion, for nothing had occurred either to stimulate particularly the intelligence of their hearers, or, which is more important, to touch or irritate their consciences.

The author from whom I have just quoted handles Aristotle in the same way, and in the biographical sketch which he has prepared of him includes the following paragraph:

"Once and again in the first two books of his treatise does he repeat the solemn warning that our object in inquiring into the nature of virtue is not that we may know what virtue is, but that we may be virtuous. Once and again does he enter a protest against the tendencies of his countrymen, always ready to stand and debate even when the solution of the problem was to be found only in motion and action. Subtleties of any kind indeed are not suitable for a moral discourse. Ethical philosophy refers as distinctly to a deed as a sword refers to a cut; and all questions of morals are idle and pernicious that do not bear directly on some practical result."

We have already spoken of the tone of John the Baptist's address to the throngs that gathered to his preaching in the wilderness. He leveled his instructions to what he knew to be their need. He made no apologies for the directness of his discourse. There was no attempt to win them to

himself, but only to point out to them the path of personal and individual duty and to insist on their walking in it. His preaching was motived by no disposition to make truth acceptable to his hearers or duty easy for them. Instead of abating the strenuousness of obligation and letting it down to the lower level of life they were leading, he aimed only to elevate them to the higher level of the life they were not leading.

He worked for results. There was no dramatic representation of what men in general ought to be, but an undecorated exhibit of what the men in front of him ought to be. We can depend upon it that when his hearers went back to their respective businesses, they did not go congratulating themselves on the attractive presentation of truth to which it had been their great pleasure to listen.

Very likely it had not been to them altogether a pleasure, for what he had dwelt upon had not been of a kind to appeal to their dramatic instincts or to induce in them complacency and self-felicitation. In other words, John the Baptist was a preacher, and, as already intimated, when some time later he pushed his moral poignard down a little deeper into the place where the nerves lie so thick and so sensitive, the victim of his discourse struck back and he had to bleed for it. The blood he shed was proof presumptive that he preached, not lectured.

All of that which we have been remarking of John the Baptist is equally true, more than equally true, of the discourses of our Lord. We have an idea that there was a certain gentleness about the way in which Christ dealt with his audience that can not be predicated of the Baptist. But even so, the larger part of what is preserved to us is very much in the nature of a surgical operation. His surgery was ordinarily—not always—exceedingly courteous and considerate, but it was surgery. He stripped off the cuticle and operated among the nerves,—and that hurts.

When he said unto them, "Woe unto you, scribes, pharisees, hypocrites," the operation was not only a surgical one, but one that was untempered by tenderness of method. It is not easy to understand exactly what is meant by people who expatiate serenely and comfortably upon the winsomeness of the lessons that are taught in the gospels and the appeals that are distributed through them.

Take, as an example, the Sermon on the Mount, with its ominous conclusion. The Decalogue is not an approximation to it in the severity of its demands.

The latter puts before men an ideal of what they should do; the former an ideal of what they should be. Anybody can do right if he tries hard, but he has to try a great deal harder in order to be right. We do not have to exert ourselves in order to abstain from killing our neighbor, but how about loving that neighbor,—not simply loving James, whom it may be easy to be fond of, but loving William, despicable, ugly, dirty William?

There is, to be sure, a great deal of love wrought into the texture of the gospel, and so the slopes of the high hills are covered with flowers of ineffable beauty, and one can pick flowers and scent their fragrance without taking account of the blunt rock that lies to immeasureable depths underneath.

Misapprehension of the real situation grows out of this fact that Christ's law of life has been interpreted in a way to exempt from the duty of obeying Christ's law. Those fiery bodies that we call the fixed stars are beautiful when seen at this distance, but the heat that is in them would make it uncomfortable to live there. So Christ, viewed at the distance of twenty centuries, is attractive. We are impressed by his gentleness, his loving kindness, sympathy and patient service rendered to all kinds of need and destitution. But were he to come among us he would be just as unpopular as he was twenty centuries ago.

An ideal expressed in words is very winsome, but an ideal dressed in flesh and standing at our elbow, with its very sublimity uttering itself in silent denunciation of our own moral turpitude and spiritual paltriness, would be just what the Bible calls it, "a consuming fire." It would be like living in the hot star Sirius, so resplendent in its distant complexion but so torrid when approached near enough to become a neighbor. We should become like Peter who "fell down at Jesus' feet saying, Depart from me for I am a sinful man."

That was the secret of Christ's loneliness when upon earth. He wanted people, but they did not want him. When it came evening, as we are once told, all the people scattered to their homes. He had no home, and no one cared to entertain him for the night, and so he went forth and passed the night among the hills and under the stars. He would be treated here just as he was in Jerusalem and be called an impossible. Things have not changed in the course of two thousand years, the great things, I mean, the large relations.

Perfect holiness is the same as it was in Jerusalem and sin is the same. And the two are as far apart. And sin hates holiness as it did at the moment when the nails were being driven into Christ's body preparatory to crucifixion. I have read that long before Christ came it was declared by a certain Greek that if perfect holiness should appear on earth it would be crucified. Perhaps that is only a story. It may be true. It might be. They will not come to the light, said Jesus, because their deeds are evil. It is not so much hearing about goodness, having it described, etc., that is disquieting. On the contrary, it is rather soothing, caressing. It is only when it comes so close as to be exacting, menacing, that it begins to ruffle us.

It is pleasant to sit before an open wood fire and see the play of the flames and think long thoughts and see visions in the tongues of fire, but if the heat begins to become more than just so intense we say that it is getting too warm and we move back. Flame is pretty, wondrously fascinating, till it approaches contact with us, then it is horrible.

It is strange that a thing can be at once so charming and so repulsive; that Sirius can be so beautiful to look upon at a distance and so excruciating to live in. It is the weakness of the existing pulpit that its portrayal of holiness and sin impresses people neither with the beauty of the one nor with the hatefulness of the other and therefore with the contrast between them.

That is why we preachers get along so harmoniously with our people. It was a remark made by a former pastor of a very prominent

church in New York City that if he preached the whole truth and brought that truth close to the consciences of his congregation, he would not be allowed to remain long in his pulpit. That might seem an exaggerated statement. You can have your own opinion of it. He has since left that pulpit and is pursuing a course of instruction less distinctly religious.

Sin is not a frequent topic of pulpit discourse. Much less so than formerly. More is done to bring Christ down to the level of men than to bring men up to the level of Christ. The preference of people is to be let alone. No one objects to having truth dramatized, but to have truth preached is different; that is, if it is preached in the spirit of the text, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

There is willingness enough on the part of people to have truth represented in a way to stimulate the intellect and to warm the heart, but not to prick into the conscience. We like as much goodness as we have, but are not ambitious to be better than we are. We are more disposed to accept Christ as one who will save us in our sins than as one who will save us from our sins. Which means, if frankly expressed, that Christ is mostly a superfluity; that it is not literally true that we need any saving, that what Christianity substantially amounts to is that it is a divine arrangement by which, out of the abundance of God's love and consideration for human fallibility and depravity, and the difficulty involved in getting rid of depravity, we can be reckoned as good when we are not.

And because sin is dealt with, by the modern pulpit, with a delicate reserve not predicable of the great preachers of the Old Covenant nor of the great Apostles of the New, there has come to be a corresponding decline in the emphasis laid by the pew upon the personality of Christ and his redemptive function. It goes without the saying that a sense of sin and a sense of moral helplessness go together. The intensity of the one comes and goes with the intensity of the other. Only the invalid who realizes the seriousness of his invalidism is moved to seek the ministrations of a physician.

The preacher cannot exaggerate the grandeur of human nature as that nature lay prefigured in the mind and purpose of the Creator, but that grandeur in no wise diminishes or neutralizes the significance of those antagonistic energies of the flesh which, strangely enough, are so easily able to hold man's native magnificence in subjection, and make the soul a plaything and a slave of the body. And till there has been begotten in the pew, under the direct handling of the situation by the pulpit, a realization of that enslavement, there will be developed no compelling consciousness of the need of an Emancipator.

The majority of our clergymen, as well as of our laymen, are probably believers in the general theory of evolution; but simple observation would seem to be sufficient to constrain us all to hold the doctrine in such way as not to fall into error of supposing that what is bad can by process of unfolding develop into what is good.

Things develop undoubtedly; that is the universal tendency; it is part of the scheme of nature and of supernature; but they can develop downward as well as upward. Things can go on growing or they can go on rotting. It is just as much in the nature of a young apple, that

under certain conditions, it should become more and more decayed, as it is that under other certain conditions it should become more and more rosy and luscious. St. James unconsciously confessed himself an evolutionist when he wrote, "When evil desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

It is not the purpose of these paragraphs to discuss the doctrine of evolution, but only to assert that principle that only that which is good can grow into what is better, while that which is bad tends, at the pressure of an inherent force, toward what is worse, so that only by the interference of a power above nature can nature's tendencies be withstood and overcome. And out of that fact springs naturally the suggestion that a twentieth century preacher can only equal himself to the demands of existing conditions by making himself familiar with the thoughts that people, especially young people, are thinking upon such matters. This is a point that will offer itself for later consideration, if time shall permit.

It will be, furthermore, a part of the preacher's practical handling of his congregation to rub into the consciousness of its members the fact that engaging their intellectual attention and enlightening them is of only subordinate value, and at most only a means to a remoter end. To say of one that he is an interesting preacher, or even that he is an instructive preacher, may mean much, and may mean nothing at all. "He came that they might have life," says the Gospel of John, and light is not life, not necessarily. Mere illumination will not make a plant grow, nor restrain the leaves on the trees from decaying and falling to earth.

A highly educated congregation is not to be dealt with in a manner different from that to be pursued in addressing an uneducated one, except so far as the mode of address is concerned, but not so far as relates to its matter and the object had in view.

One great difficulty involved in addressing cultivated listeners lies in the fact that if the discourse be what is called an ably constructed one, the enjoyment that they take, in feeling their own mental machinery moving responsively, they will suppose to be religious enjoyment. Experiencing the revolution of the wheels of our mentality is a pleasurable one always. And very often that is all that a person means when he says of his minister that he likes his preaching. If he understood himself better he would say that he is fascinated by his own cerebral activity. Or he may say that he likes his preacher because of the way that he put things; he is entertained by the preacher's intellectual agility.

The same thing is true in the sanctuary as is true of the majority of attendants at a concert hall, who come away from the rendering of a celebrated violinist charmed, they say, with the music which he discourses, while the real fact in the case is that they are captivated by his digital dexterity, and were anxious to sit where they could see him, since it is with their eyes that they listened rather than with their ears. So in listening to a pianist, so in listening to a vocalist, who is certain to stir the house to tumultuous applause if she is able to bring her flight to a finish by lighting at sky-C.

By making the pulpit the medium for dealing directly with people

with a view to promoting their more and more complete emancipation from sin and sin's power, and by giving it to be definitely understood that that is the pulpit's prime mission, the pulpit has secured to it a character that differentiates it from every other appliance worked in the interests of human uplift, and so creates for itself a clear place among the instrumentalities of progress.

In this way it flatly meets the question, quite often proposed, and in many instances honestly proposed, What occasion is there for the maintenance of such an institution in addition to all other influences that are being operated in man's behest, and operated with such an outlay of money, time and talent? It is a proper question to ask and one to which the pulpit, by the way in which it uses itself, and by the programme whose pursuance it publicly announces for itself and binds upon itself, should make a frank and sufficient reply. And that reply it furnishes by holding itself consistently and pronouncedly to the work of emancipating men individually and collectively from the power of sin. In that field the pulpit, using the term in its comprehensive sense, stands practically alone.

It is not a field that can be fairly said to be occupied by the press, certainly not the secular press. Its point of view if not irreligious,—as a good deal of it is,—is at any rate unreligious. If it chronicles events occurring in the religious world, it does it in a colorless way carefully inexpressive of any moral sympathy with that which the event may be supposed to import.

There is no objection to be urged against this. It is proper and to the public advantage that each aspect of our many-sided life should have its journalistic organs.

Each class of matters is best treated by experts. St. Paul could not have made a success of the New York World, any more than Mr. Pulitzer could have creditably edited the Epistles to the Romans. This is no reflection upon either the deceased editor or the Apostle.

This is not saying that our secular papers do not contain a vast amount of edifying material. Society would be poorer without them. They promote intelligence by furnishing material for thought; they bring unrelated individuals into a kind of mutual touch, help to promote a sense of the solidarity of the race, and make each several man a sharer in the life and experience of the race.

And still farther it is to be gratefully allowed that all of our best newspapers are fosterers of morality. But morality is not religion and does not carry in it even the flavor of religion's essence.

As for our religious journals, not as much is to be said for most of them as it would be pleasant to say. Speaking broadly, they do not make large contributions toward the evangelizing of the world. It is a well-known fact, frequently illustrated, that they are individually so moribund that two or more have to pool their issues in order to make one live thing. Another expedient is to court popularity by reducing to magazine form and padding with secularity.

This is said in all respect to such few papers as continue to be in fact what they are in their claims, and serve as a kind of legible pulpit, presenting Christianity in its essence and with a combination of intelli-

gence and piety that commands respect. There are three elements essential to the success of religious journalism,—three that are rarely found in combination,—an unlimited amount of capital, an inexhaustible supply of brain and a rich infusion of the evangelical spirit.

The more amply, therefore, the pulpit fulfils its distinctive function as an implement of God for delivering the soul from the thraldom of sin, the more inadequate becomes the claim put forth by Sunday journalism that it brings to the reader thoughts that are as elevated in their tone, as nutritive to the intellect, as what the pulpit brings to the listener, and phrased perhaps in terms more finished and cultivated in their diction than any of which the average preacher may be capable.

No one will deny the literary, intellectual and possibly also the ethical claims of our best secular journals, especially in their Sunday issues, which, saving the coarse and flashy cartoons with which most of them are disfigured, are the choicest of the week. But even so, they are not constructed, and are not intended to be constructive, in a way to accomplish what is properly the prime purpose of Christian preaching, viz., to hold the soul consciously in the presence of its God and thus to deliver it out of the power of the devil into a growing experience of divine sonship. Second only to the lusts of the flesh, Sunday journalism and the automobile are the worst enemies of sanctuary worship.

Nor any more than the press does the stage cover the territory specifically accorded to the pulpit. In an interview which it was my pleasure to have with Madame Bernhardt a year or two ago, one question which I asked her she failed to answer. She had told me that any inquiry I put to her she would reply to, but in one instance she was evasive, and very much to my regret, for I felt that her answer to that particular question would reveal a good deal to me as to the moral and religious attitude of the great actress. The inquiry to which I failed to receive a reply was this: "Do you give your preference to the pulpit or the stage considered as means of human uplift?"

She is too bright and too experienced a person not to have a rather definite opinion upon a question of that kind, lying so close as it does to the line of her own interest and pursuit. I have always wondered why it was that, communicative as she proved to be upon all other matters to which her attention was called, she was so reticent upon this.

Even among distinctively church circles there has been during the last fifty years a decided change of opinion, or at least of usage, as toward the theater. Whether the truth of the case is to be stated by saying that change of sentiment induced change of usage, or change of usage induced change of sentiment, is a question about which opinions might differ. We know that in such matters people sometimes alter their customs and habits first, and then adjust their opinions to match. It is rather commonly the case that we shape our doctrines to fit our behavior rather than our behavior to fit our doctrines, and, having learned to allow ourselves modes of living and doing that conscience would at one time have forbidden, turn around and fix over our doctrine in a way to satisfy the necessities of our altered and perhaps deteriorated behavior; for we do like to keep our conduct and our creed somewhere in sight of each

other, whether by prodding the one or curbing the other. This is not, however, to be taken as a critique upon the theater, for that which the theater has to offer—assuming of course that it is untainted—undoubtedly meets a legitimate demand, in that it ministers refreshment that is rational without being mentally wearying and that is diverting without being sensuously debasing.

All of this, however, is simply preliminary to my confident contention that except in the very rarest instances are people made either finer in their piety or even purer in their morals by what is offered them by the stage. A man is not religiously nor morally bettered by any influence that does not tend to some sort of moral or religious action, and that is a result which, judging from observation and from experience, is not predicable of dramatic exhibition. The whole movement upon the boards is maintained in an unsubstantial atmosphere of make-believe. A successful actress, who consulted me in regard to certain matters that touched closer to the line of actual living than those that were traversed by her own dramatic experience, once said to me, "That which you say is probably true but I have lived so long and so constantly in the realm of the unreal that I am not able to discriminate between what is true and what is false."

A whole audience may be brought to sob with tender emotion without a single member having his heart permanently softened into a condition of finer altruism. Tears wrung from the eyes by fictitious sin or fictitious sorrow neither spring from the heart nor soak back into the heart in gracious irrigation.

The preacher of today has to address himself to people who are in almost every respect in a condition of unsettlement and revolt, and to the extent that he realizes that fact it will be one of his aims to secure in them quietness and establishment of mind. When we speak into a storm our voices will not carry. The pulpit today faces an attitude of denial. The age is a thoughtful one and if feeling produces among people relations of convergence, thinking produces correspondingly a state of divergence. People feel together, but think apart. The situation, so far forth, is a wholesome one, but it is a difficult one to face. It is better to be a sincere heretic than to go stumbling along under the burden of a barren tradition. It is better to think wrong than not to think at all.

At the same time, while there is a stimulus in speaking to a congregation made up of men and women who think that there is not in addressing a crowd of intellectual dummies, or an assembly of such people as the preachers of fifty or a hundred years ago had to address, who in all matters of Christian doctrine expected the parson to do their thinking for them, and during his ministrations patiently slept out of confidence in his doctrinal infallibility, yet the altered situation subjects the preacher of the present to a strain that while stimulating is also perplexing.

Prophetic authority may be considered as a qualified preacher's prerogative; but it still remains a fact that in these days the people in the pews are slow to believe a thing is true simply on the strength of the preacher's ipse dixit. It will not be true to them because he says it is true. So far forth, he is the prisoner in the dock and they are the jury,

and after the service is over and the benediction pronounced they will gather about their respective dinner tables and bring in their verdict.

As things are, very little will be accomplished by any direct attempt to refute existing errors of opinion, certainly not if they are errors that are sincerely entertained, as very likely they are. There is, however, an underlying basis of orthodoxy in every man's soul. It is at that point that the preacher has to put in his work. The foundations of our nature are not laid in the false but in the true. The constitutional veracity latent in the human is our one available point of access.

To whatever extent error may have developed, fundamentally we are not fools. However far inward depravity may have pursued its corrosive course, we are not totally corrupted. Unless a man has ceased to be human there still survives in him a spot, a residuum of original soundness. And it is that spot really that does the only effective homiletical work. Every man has to be his own preacher. The testimony of his own soul is about the only testimony that he puts unreserved confidence in.

A man cannot be argued, nor argue himself, out of what he himself personally testifies to. What I know, I know, even if it is something that I do not like to know. It was when the prodigal come to himself that were constructed in him the beginnings of a new life. It was when Nathan had succeeded in penetrating to the original David and in making David reason with himself, that he gained the object, and gathered the fruits of his discourse.

Sin can be resolved into environment and heredity till the sinner has been forced to forget his surroundings and his ancestry and to look straight into his own eye, and his consciousness has become definitely and exclusively self-consciousness. And, in general, the preacher will have accomplished the legitimate purpose of his sermon if he shall have succeeded in sending his hearers out of the church less mindful of the thoughts and phrases that have come to them from the pulpit, than they are of the discourse that is being delivered to them from the closer and more persuasive oracles of their own hearts.—Copyright 1913 Yale University Press.

I. THE GOD BEHIND THE WORLD.

"In the Beginning God."—Genesis 1:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Roberts, the noted English homilist, unfolded the implications of this verse along the following lines:

I. "In the beginning God." 1. Thus would I solve all the problems of life for time and eternity. 2. Thus would I remove all obstacles to genuine progress. 3. Thus would I overcome all doubts and fears, all dangers and diseases, all sin and death.

II. "In the beginning God." God so recognized, so admitted, so accepted, so loved, so entirely trusted and obeyed in the beginning as to make sure of God all the way through and forever. 1. God in the beginning of life, so as to produce Samuel and John the Baptist. 2. God in the beginning of national life, and we have Christian America. 3. Without God Peter and his partners fished all night and caught nothing. With God the Son as a volunteer partner in the business, though the best time for fishing had passed, they tried again and success was marvelous.

4. "In the beginning God," and David the shepherd boy slew a lion, a bear, and the Philistine giant. Later in life David the king left the path of duty, left God, and defeat and disgrace and shame and remorse too awful to describe came upon him. 5. "In the beginning God," and Samson was invincible. Breaking his covenant connection with God, he becomes the blind slave of his enemies. What a contrast!

III. In the beginning of the day, God; in the middle of the day, God; in the end of the day, God; and all through the day, God. Sunrise, noonday, sunset, and midnight, God. With my eyes on the sun, the shadows all fall behind me. "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psa. 16:8-11. "In the beginning God" was in Solomon's life. And the glory of his rise and reign, who can tell? Leaving God out, he tried everything under the sun, and all was vanity and vexation of spirit. In his sad retrospect he delivers a burning message to young men: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man." "In the beginning God."

* * *

Dr. Joseph Parker treated it in this way:

I. Man naturally asks for some account of the world in which he lives. The answer of the text as to the creation of the heavens and the earth is: 1, simple, 2, sublime; 3, sufficient.

If God created all things, then (a) all things are under his government; (b) the heavens and the earth may be studied religiously: (c) it is reasonable that he should take an interest in the things which he created.

II. Biblical theology teaches: 1, that creation is an expression of God's mind; 2, that creation may form the basis for the consideration of God's personality and character; 3, that God's word is its own security for fulfilment; 4, that the word which accounts for the existence of nature accounts also for the existence of man.

* * *

Preaching on "God in Creation and Nature," Rev. Dr. Josiah Sibley used this introduction:

One summer I was tramping through picturesque Marin County, just across the bay from San Francisco. By the side of the quiet stream, all at once, was borne upon the air an odor of such sweetness as far surpassed the customary redolent aroma of the woods. "What is that sweet perfume?" said I. "It is the sure sign of the azalea. Keep your eyes open and you will see it before long," replied my friend. Sure enough a turn in the pathway displayed a glorious spray of blossoms. The delicious atmosphere was sure evidence of unexpected beauty not far away. So the pathway of the universe and of life is filled with evidence of the unsuspected presence and purpose of God. These tokens, like the silken strand running through every genuine greenback, testify unseen purposes of life from God's standpoint that we never dreamed of. As the Damascus blade bears its maker's name, inwrought in its very metal, so God's directorship is witnessed in many an unsuspected turn of life and fortune.

Take God from Nature and what would this universe be but conglomerations of matter accidentally thrown together exhibiting its highest forms of life as fighting, snarling, struggling creatures soon to pass into their original dust; blind worlds flying from the origin of an unknown past to the sure destruction of an unknown future.

With God there how Nature is glorified. And God is there. Wherever is beauty or power or the working forward to a common end, there is God. "Conscience and law," says Dr. G. A. Gordon, "are not the whole of God; God is power, thought, beauty, the terrestrial and cosmic disposition that on the whole favors life in this world." Every infinitesimal and tremendous exhibition of power in nature, every delicate tinting of an autumn leaf, is the echo of God's footsteps and the tracing of his brush.

Not only is God stamped on everything in nature, but how constantly his unseen purposes reveal themselves on later pages as we read the book of nature. We have heard much in recent years of the necessity of guarding the coal deposits of Alaska. In prehistoric ages the frigid north basked in the sunshine of torrid heat and trees grew in tropic luxury where now only is found the icy dwelling of glaciers. What but the omniscience of a good God could have preserved all the stored up heat of the sun in the vegetable matter of those fat ages for the blessing of man in the far distant time of the future, when the face of the sun should not be so genial? Gold and silver and lead and iron in the fiery days of earth's formation little knew of their service to the generations of man in the distant ages of the future. But the great God girded them though they knew him not. Herodotus said, "Egypt is the gift of the Nile to Man." Livingstone and Stanley found that the melting of the

snows on the glorious mountains hidden in the depths of Africa was girded of God for the performance of transforming Egypt into a garden spot. Did you ever take that picturesque trip by boat down the San Joaquin River from Stockton to San Francisco? Do you remember the multitude of Tuli islands that produce such marvelous crops of celery and potatoes? That fertility comes from the gathering of the flotsam and jetsam in the reeds of the tuli plants. Who would have thought that worthless trash could serve such mighty purpose?

Once the lightning and thunderbolts were but the playthings of cruel gods, according to man's imagination. But in the twinkling light of great cities, in the whir of machinery and in the rapid transit of vast multitudes is evidenced the long unsuspected purpose of the lightning, harnessed as it is to bring a thousand blessings to man under the guise of electricity. In that terrible wreck of the Titanic how wonderfully the unsuspected purpose of God was evidenced in the mysterious using of the very currents of air for the transmission of messages over the far distance. Thus do countless forces and phases of the material universe testify how the things of earth are thrilling with the unthought-of things of heaven.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Creation (1).

John Newton had a valued friend who ignored the Bible and said that all things came by chance. They were both great students of astronomy, and so Newton devised a plan to make his friend feel ashamed of his "by chance" theory of creation. He had made for him an astronomical globe by one of the best artists of London under his specific direction, and had it placed in his library, where his friend was to meet him on a certain day to talk over astronomical facts. The globe arrested his attention at once, as a wonderful production of intellect and art, and he exclaimed:

"Why, Newton, where in the world did you get that magical work of art and star knowledge?"

"Oh," said Newton, "I came into my library yesterday and here it was. It came entirely by chance, just to convince me of the truth of your theory of creation."

His friend saw the point at once—how impossible it was, and if so, how impossible that the heavens which declare the glory of God could have come by chance, if this human picture of them could only come by the design of a scholar and the expert work of the artist who made it. As a result he became an earnest Christian.—Selected.

Sensing God (2).

John Burroughs is not, in the conventional sense of the term, a religious man. But when he was in the Yosemite Valley, where the Yosemite Falls burst on the view in their majesty as they tumble and plunge over the dizzy crags, he was heard in deepest reverence to whisper: "O, Almighty God!" He felt, perhaps involuntarily, that he had touched the hem of the garment of creative glory. There are favored places amid nature's wonders, there are holy hours in nature's moods, when a vision of infinite glory awes and hushes the human

spirit as it hushed and awed the spirit of Isaiah in the temple.—Rev. O. H. Carmichael.

In the Beginning, God (3).

In Ocean Grove, N. J., at the foot of the broad pathway, where it joins the boardwalk, there fluttered in the ocean breeze during the last summer a lofty white flag, bearing in large letters the simple inscription: In the Beginning, God. By day and by night, it carried the thoughts of passing multitudes back to the time when the mighty restless waves, still beating on the sands, fled back at the Creator's voice. A few years since, several eminent instructors and pastors of different branches of the Church walked to the extreme end of a projecting pier at Atlantic City in face of a violent wind storm. As the waves dashed high, they stood for a long time in silence, overawed. At length Dr. Schaeffer, the senior in the party, slowly said: "And yet—and yet—the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."—Selected.

The Great First Cause (4).

The cause must exist before the effect. However vast the scale on which the universe marks time, God is to be thought of as antedating the clock's first tick; and his eternity stretches away to infinity back of that. Halley's comet completes a great period of seventy-five years; but Donati's comet of 1858 visits us once in 2,000 years. Men are now ninety years old who remember Halley's comet in childhood; but the same men would be but infants on the planet Neptune, where a single year is 164 of those on earth. In that quadruple star, Epsilon Lyræ, in each pair the individuals perform their revolutions once in, say, one hundred years, but the pairs once in 1,000 years. The sun shoots through space at the rate of twelve miles a second, with a possible orbit, so Maedler believes, around Alcyone of the Pleiades; but nothing can yet show what millenniums must pass till it has completed a single revolution. "A thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

God Before All (5).

Motion requires a mover. There must have been a time when motion began, before which there was no motion. There must have been a reason for motion beginning just then, no sooner, no later. Not only the earth, moon, and planets, but also the sun and "fixed stars" have been found to be in motion. Moreover, the motions of the universe are orderly, systematic, exact. If a ball come rolling through this room, it is obvious that some one threw it. If one go tramping through a forest hitherto untrodden, as he supposes, by the foot of man, and he suddenly come upon a watch lying on the ground, which he finds to be "going," he knows that some one has been there before him, and only a little before.—Selected.

Discerning God's Presence (6).

Turn to the story of Charles Gordon at Khartoum, or John Lawrence in India, or James Chalmers, so gladly laying down his life for the men who murdered him in New Guinea. and you will find what it

means when we speak of the strength and possibility of the men who heard the voice of God, because they were ready so gladly to obey it. Is there any reason why you and I should not have the same privilege and the same blessing; or that our God should not be our constant friend, or that we should not know that he is never far from any one of us?—Stimson.

The Divine Artist (7).

It is most noteworthy that nature is a work of art. It might have presented an aspect ever dull, uninteresting, or even grotesque and horrible. That it has done so in some localities only emphasizes the fact that art reigns elsewhere over the surface of the earth. Art implies an artist. Human art is but a copy of divine art. The human artist is a "seer," seeing art in nature, and imperfectly imitating it upon the canvas. But the most remarkable thing is that, even where man has interfered with nature, by the felling of its trees and the cultivation of its fields, all unconsciously to himself he has been a "worker together with God"; for, without any artistic purpose, he is found to have left a tree, built a fence, plowed a field, or gathered a harvest, in such a way as to have produced an artistic result. Thus "working out his own salvation," he has also shown that "it is God that worketh in him."—Selected.

Accepting God's Account of It (8). For my part I am willing to accept God's account of what happened. He says, "In the beginning." If you can show me any man who has gone back of the beginning I shall be ready to listen to his arguments.—William Jennings Bryan.

"The Eternal" (9).

There is a God adequate to meet man's needs, and the mind of man in its superior moments cannot escape the sense of his presence. Clerk Maxwell said, "I have looked up many strange theories and have found that none of them will work without the intervention of God." In the height of the scientific storm of the last century Professor Tyndall delivered a famous address before the British Association of Science at Belfast, in which he swept away the foundations for faith in everything beyond the material world. Years after a friend asked him, "When at the bounds of things material what did you find?" He replied, "I stood before the Eternal." "Why, then, did you not say so in your Belfast address?" was the inevitable question. And there came the slow reply, "It was a great mistake!"—Rev. Henry A. Stimson, D. D

II. THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.

"Am I My Brother's Keeper?" Gen. 4:9.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. H. Tremont, D.D., said: I. Every man who comes within the sphere of my influence is my brother and has a brother's claim upon my loving sympathy and gracious ministries.

When I say "Our Father who art in heaven," I confess judgment; I acknowledge the genuineness of the relationship and the validity of the claim.

Christ linked us inseparably to these fatherhood and brotherhood claims, when he stated the great commandment, "Thou shalt love . . . God . . . and thy neighbor."

All selfishness, indifference to other's welfare, securing personal advantage at other's expense, unjustifiable competition, industrial oppression, wrongs and crimes against others, all war, are direct violations of Christ's brotherhood code.

All narrow prejudices, aroused by pride of culture, of wealth, of race, of sectarianism, re-echoes Cain's query, which was a sort of blasphemy against human nature. The caste spirit is the spirit of Cain.

II. Acknowledge these brotherhood claims and most of our social problems will find their solution. They are even more largely matters of sentiment than of wages or material demands. Industrial troubles began when employer and employee forgot their family ties and affection, moved on to different streets and became arrayed against each other as "bobs and nabobs."

The cross of Christ emphasizes the great brotherhood truth that, just because a man has wealth and culture he is all the more under obligation to be the friend of the victim of poverty and illiteracy. Social and financial advantages, instead of bringing immunity from these claims, increase responsibility.

* * *

Archbishop Thompson said: I. This is an age of rights rather than of duties. It is very notable that there is almost nothing about rights in the teaching of Christ. The Lord seeks to train the spirit of his followers into doing and suffering aright. But by preaching love and duty, the Gospel has been the lawgiver of nations, the friend of man, the champion of his rights. Its teaching has been of God, of duty, and of love; and wherever these ideas have come, freedom and earthly happiness and cultivation have followed silently behind.

II. Our age needs to be reminded that in one sense each of us has the keeping of his brethren confided to him, and that love is the law and the fulfilling of the law. The rights of men to our love, to our consideration, rest upon an act of divine love. Their chartered right to our reverence is in these terms: That God loved them and sent his son to be the propitiation for their sins, and the Saviour set to it his seal and signed it with his blood.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Short Sermon on Brotherly Love (10).

The following is translated from the French:

You have only a day to spend here on earth; act in such a manner that you may spend it in peace.

Peace is the fruit of love; for, in order to live in peace, we must bear with a great many things.

None is perfect; each has his failings each hangs upon the other, and love alone renders that weight light.

If you can not bear with your brother, how will he bear with you?

It is written of Jesus that, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

For that reason, love your brother, who is in the world, and love him unto the end.

Love is indefatigable; it never grows weary. Love is inexhaustible; it lives and is born anew in the living, and the more it pours itself out, the fuller its fountain.

Whosoever loves himself better than he loves his brother, is not worthy of Christ, who died for his brothers. Have you given away everything you possess?

Go and give up your life also if needed!

Verily, I say unto you, the heart of a man that loves is a paradise on earth. He has God within him, for God is love!

The wicked man loves not, he covets; he hungers and thirsts for everything; his eyes, like unto the eyes of a serpent, fascinate and allure, but only to devour.

Love rests at the bottom of every pure soul, like a drop of dew in the calyx of a flower. Oh, if you knew what it is to love!

Lincoln's Golden Words (11).

We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.—Abraham Lincoln.

Love and Hatred (12).

There are trees in the tropics, on which white blossoms hang close by the withered fruit; there are days when the pale moon shows itself near the bright sun, and it is given to the soul of man to feel love and hatred, both at the same time, and to direct both to the same end.—Ebers.

A Man's Kin (13).

Blackstone estimated that the average man has 67,000,000 fourteenth cousins.

"The Road of the Loving Heart" (14)

While Robert Louis Stevenson's friend, Mataafa, one of the claimants for the throne in Upolo, was imprisoned by the powers along with other chiefs who had sided with him, Mr. Stevenson cheered their

captivity with numerous presents of comforts such as they prized. On their release they came to thank him, and declared they must commemorate his kindness by some lasting work. So they decided to make a fine wide road to his house through the bush, a work involving great labor, a thing not loved by any Samoan, and despised as unworthy by a chief. In spite of all this, it was duly finished, and opened with a great feast under the name, "The Road of the Loving Heart."—Stevenson's Life.

Team Work (15).

In one of his addresses Mr. W. C. Pearce tells of being on the street in Chicago one day when a trolley car was held up for some time by a heavy wagon getting stuck on the track. Two span of horses vainly tugged to pull it off, but their efforts amounted to nothing, as they pulled alternately instead of simultaneously. After a little a teamster came along driving a compact team of bays. "Take off those horses," said he, "and let me have a chance at that load." The men laughed at him and said, "What can your team do when four horses have failed?" "Well," said he, "I'd like to have a try at it." Having hitched his team up to the load, he gently tightened the reins, and then quietly uttered the two words: "Steady—together." The horses responded by settling into their collars for a long, strong pull, with the result that the load moved, and the crowd cheered.

The Roots of Brother Love (16).

Emerson once said, "The arch-abolitionist, older than John Brown and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it." That same Love and Justice, older than battleships or the brutality that wants them, is still here—was alive before wars began and will be after they are ended.—Rev. Henry M. Simmons.

Our Neighbor (17).

What, then, is our neighbor? Thou hast regarded his thought, his feeling, as somehow different from thine. Thou hast said, "A pain in him is not like a pain in me, but something far easier to bear." He seems to thee a little less living than thou; his life is dim, it is cold; it is a pale fire beside thy own burning desires. . . . So, dimly and by instinct, hast thou lived with thy neighbor, and hast known him not, being blind. Have done with this illusion, and simply try to learn the truth. Pain is pain, joy is joy, everywhere, even as in thee. In all the songs of the forest birds, in all the cries of the wounded and dying, struggling in the captor's power; in the boundless sea where the myriads of water creatures strive and die; amid all the countless hordes of savage men; in all sickness and sorrow; in all exultation and hope, everywhere, from the lowest to the noblest, the same conscious, burning, wilful life is found, endlessly manifold as the forms of the living creatures, unquenchable as the fires of the sun, real as these impulses that even now throb in thine own selfish little heart. Lift up thy eyes, behold that life, and then turn away and forget it if thou canst; but, if thou hast known that, thou hast begun to know thy duty—Josiah Royce.

Barriers (18).

Barriers and prisons are of two kinds: There is a wall of stone in Sing Sing; it is a barrier. There is a sea around Patmos, the convict island; it is also a barrier. Dives dug a gulf between himself and his fellows; it was a barrier, and beyond that abyss he could not pass. With golden spade Dives dug that gulf and isolated himself, seeking an end named happiness; nature and God made the gulf to be fixed, and lo, the end was misery and pain. For the aristocracies of selfishness divide men, while the democracies of Jesus unite society in the interest of unity, growth, and happiness.—N. D. Hillis.

They Helped Each Other (19).

Good companions strengthen us to stand for truth and God. William Arnot relates that when going to school he had to cross the ford on the river Earn. When the current was strong the children used to take each others' hands, and so they passed safely through. They who are sorely tempted must find good companions or make them. Every Christian, man or woman, boy or girl, should have Christian comrades.

Thoughts for Others (20).

A queer old man once made a tea party for the little girls in town. When they had all come and were gathered in his front yard, he offered a doll for the most popular little girl, and asked them all to vote which should have the prize. But many of them did not know what "most popular" meant. So he told them it was the best-liked girl. Then they all voted, and Mary was the one who had the most votes and received the doll, though no one could say that she was either the prettiest or the cleverest of them all. "Now," said the queer old man, "I will give another doll to the one that first tells me why all like Mary the best." Nobody answered at first. But presently one of them spoke up and said: "It's because Mary always finds out what the rest of us want to play, and then says, 'Let's play that.'"—The Presbyterian of the South.

"God Bless Him" (21).

Concerning General Howard, Dr. F. E. Clark says: When first appointed in command of a regiment located at Governor's Island, he used to walk up and down Broadway, New York, where he was jostled in the crowds. This jostling pained and irritated him, as his arm had been amputated at the shoulder. In his fear that this irritation would sour his disposition he used to pray, as any one ran into him and hurt him, "God bless him!" This habit became such second nature with him that he was constantly praying for those about him.

A Threshold Greeting (22).

An Italian emigrant steamer, every available foot of its deck space crowded with sea-worn passengers, steamed into New York harbor, and was making its way up to a North River dock. Just in mid-stream a double-decked ferry boat, laden with commuters from New Jersey suburbs of the big metropolis, slowed up to allow the steamer to cross its bows. For a moment or two the commuters, most of them New York business men on the way to their offices, stared with cool indifference

at this shipload of peasant foreigners, many of them fresh from the slavery of Sicilian mines, others from the worn-out, tax-ridden fields of Calabria. In wonder, much as might so many round-eyed oxen, the immigrants gazed at the prosperous looking inhabitants of the new land to which they had come.

Then a young man on the upper deck of the ferry boat, prompted probably by nothing better than a spirit of fun, waved a newspaper. That wave did the work. Those two thousand voyage-wearied peasants understood. The careless waving of the newspaper meant to them a friendly welcome from the kinsfolk of their adoption; it meant a cheery greeting from the land of the free. And how they did respond. In an instant the crowded decks blazed with color, became alive with motion. A thousand gay-hued handkerchiefs were in the air, a thousand battered hats were waving.

Across the narrow strip of water separating the two boats leaped the enthusiasm. It spread among the commuters. Cold indifference gave way to good-natured interest. Brokers, merchants, bankers, clerks, young women stenographers—all caught the spirit of the moment. Silk hats, derbies and white handkerchiefs were waved in answer to the salute of the poor immigrants. Between the two sets of passengers, of course, was still a wide social gap, but for a moment humanity bridged it clear and fair.—Youth's Companion.

Contempt (23).

The spirit of contempt is fatal to any endurable personal relations to another, and every approach to this spirit is an obstacle to a bettering relation. It is the worst of mistakes, therefore, to suppose that, as one's friendships become more intimate, they may become less truly reverent. The intimacy of friendship is not measured by the number of privacies insolently invaded; and even the closest life relation may not spare the spirit of genuine respect and deference. The real friend will not demand; he only asks. The very highest fruit of friendship can hardly be withheld from the genuinely reverent spirit, whereas every trace of contempt embitters and degrades.—Henry Churchill King.

III. A WALK THROUGH LIFE WITH GOD.

"And Enoch Walked with God; and He Was Not; for God Took Him." Genesis 5:24.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

The significance of the name Enoch, according to Genesis, is "initiated," or "initiating." He was initiated into the great secret of life; he had learned life's supreme lesson, that he who enters into and steadfastly maintains right relations with God has solved the problem of true living. This is the Christian's secret of a happy life. The right spiritual adjustment of the soul means the right adjustment of all life's relations.

He who is "initiated," and he alone, is truly qualified for initiating others. The very first qualification of the minister, theological and seminary professor, Sunday School teacher, is the spiritual quickening and illumination of his own life. He must first have learned if he would successfully teach.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Atkinson used the following outline: Few words are needed to describe the salient features of the majority of human lives. It is not needful to write a volume to tell whether a man has spent a noble or a wasted life. One stroke of the pen, one solitary word, may be enough.

I. Here is a life suddenly and prematurely cut short; for although Enoch lived 365 years, it was not half the usual age of the men of his day.

II. Enoch's was a life spent amid surrounding wickedness.

III. It was a life spent in fellowship with God. This expression "walked with God" has a very peculiar force. There is in it the idea of strong persistence and determination. There is also the idea of progress.

IV. Enoch's was a life of noble testimony.

V. Enoch's was a life crowned by translation. His translation was: 1, a reminder to the men of his day that there was another state above and beyond the present; 2, an intimation of the final reward of the saints. The eternal life which was given to him will be granted, sooner or later, to every child of God.

* * *

Every Day Religion—This walking with God implies agreement, trust, friendship, progress in knowledge and holiness. Observe that Enoch "walked with God" without: 1. A Bible. Slaves to the letter. Interpret precept into practice. "Sermons in stones, God in everything." 2. A church. Deduct church-going from our worship, and what is left? 3. The sacraments. Every meal should be a sacrament. 4. Saint-fellowship. Times of degeneracy and sin, when the child of God stands alone.

Walking With God.

I. It is possible for man to walk with God. How is this

brought about? The word Enoch means "trained," or "educated." His good training brought with it this happy state. 2. Enoch set himself apart purposely to walk with God. Of what importance is decision! 3. He was enabled to overcome all difficulties by means of faith. Faith, the source of all triumphs. 4. He not only exercised this faith for himself, but spent his life in doing good. He was "a preacher of righteousness."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Walking With God is Saintliness (24).

Dr. Arnold of Rugby gives in one of his letters an account of a saintly sister. For twenty years through some disease she was confined to a kind of crib; never once could she change her posture for all that time. "And yet," says Dr. Arnold, "I never saw a more perfect instance of the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind. Intense love, almost the annihilation of selfishness; a daily martyrdom for twenty years, during which she adhered to her early-formed resolution of never talking about herself; thoughtful about the very pins and ribbons of my wife's dress, about the making of a doll's cap for a child; but of herself—save as regarded her improvement in all goodness—wholly thoughtless; enjoying everything lovely, graceful, beautiful, high-minded, whether in God's work or man's, with the keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fullness of the promise; and preserved through the very valley of the shadow of death from all fear or impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's glorious work. May God grant that I might come within but one hundred degrees of her place in glory."—Pierson.

Keeping Step With God (25).

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." Traversing one night a city street, I was startled by a sharp clanging above my head. On looking up, I found myself directly beneath the tower wherein a huge clock was striking the midnight hour. I took my watch from my pocket, and lo! the slender hands were pointing exactly to the hour of twelve. It scarcely seemed possible that that tiny piece of mechanism in my hand could keep time with the huge machinery that filled a whole room of the tower; but the proof was before me, and as I gazed at the two pairs of hands of such diverse proportions, I understood as never before that the most insignificant human being needed only to be clean, in running order and divinely regulated to keep time with divinity itself—to be perfect even as the Father is perfect.—Selected.

Dropping Behind (26).

Professor Hugh Black, in "Christ's Service of Love," says: "A young Jewess who is now a Christian asked a lady who had instructed her in the gospel to read history with her, 'Because,' said she, 'I have been reading the Gospels and I am puzzled. I want to know when Christians began to be so different from Christ.'"

Walking Through Trials (27).

A well known minister wished to ascend a tower that commanded

a fine view of the surrounding country. "Come this way, sir," said the guide, leading him to some steps which looked as though they led down into a vault. "But I want to ascend, not descend!" "This is the way up, sir." A few steps down led to many steps up. He reached the top, and a fine panoramic landscape lay stretched before him. So our guide leads us down that he may lead us up to those heights of vision and power prepared for those who honor him.—S. S. Chronicle.

Whose I Am, and Whom I Serve (28).

"I belong to the King." So read the legend on the collar of a little terrier which followed King Edward's bier. He was a mere dog, and not beautiful at that. But he had been loved by a king, had lain on a king's knee, had entree to royal apartments which the best accredited visitors might not enter. Many the affectionate glances he received as he trotted soberly in the funeral cortege, bearing this legend: "I am Caesar; I belong to the King." Thus many a lowly disciple has found himself exalted. Even humble service is worth while when one belongs to the King. Christ came to create this sense of relationship in us, to help us know ourselves as belonging to his Father. What temptations would be mastered, what bitterness accepted without complaint, what harsh words choked, what defilements indignantly repudiated, if in moments of stress we could say: "I belong to the King!"—George C. Peck.

Wholly God's (29).

When General Booth was asked what had been the secret of his success, he replied: "I will tell you the secret—God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities, but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do for them, I made up my mind that God should have all of William Booth there was; and if anything has been achieved, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life."—Selected.

Knowing God as a Friend (30).

All great men of the historic past emphasize the doctrine of a personal God—the God of infinite love.

There is Socrates talking to his protecting genius, and Demosthenes invoking the inspiration of the immortal gods. Daniel Webster was once asked: "What is the greatest thought you ever had?" Said the mightiest of American orators: "The greatest thought I ever had was that of my personal responsibility to a personal God."

God's personality of divine love is the genius and inspiration of all history. The institutions that are evolving through human conceit are like the pageant of the theater—you gaze upon it till the scene changes, and then it is gone. But God is the divine dramatist of supreme love.

The problem of religion is reunion with God, and the problem of God is the reception and understanding of his marvelous love. That God is, intelligent men have always and everywhere believed. Human intuitions and actual experience have given the lie to the dreary nega

tions of a speculative atheism. Man has been theistic, but in one sense alone he has been agnostic. He has been largely and seriously ignorant of the character of God. If he has been certain that God is, he has been uncertain what God is; if he has been certain of God's existence, he has been in doubt as to his attributes. We are to believe, with a settled and progressive faith, in the impartiality and universality of his love. Here is the solution of the world's doubt, here is the answer to the deepest and most anxious question of our hearts. While traveling through hell, Dante was cheered when, looking through pitchy clouds he saw a star. The Christian has the star of God's love ever above him. This love-star is the guide and solace of every weary traveler in a storm-tossed and sinful world.—Bentley.

An Opportunity for Better Acquaintance (31).

It is only Jesus who can say: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When that true light has shone upon a human soul, the soul may in truth reflect something of the divine upon the world yet in darkness. So Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world." So much of Jesus as may be seen in the humanity of his disciples is indeed the glimpse that the world may have of the Deity, who has chosen to reveal himself in humanity. But the world that would see God must look for him revealed, first of all, in his own Son, whose life and light the truest disciple can only reflect.

The thought of the world's need of the true light must stir the disciples of Jesus to such a dwelling in his light, such a receiving and absorption of his revelation of God, as may make them living witnesses of the whole truth set forth in their Master. So the half truth of those who find their only reflection of Deity in human souls may lead them to see the true light and, rejoicing in it, to have life.—The Presbyterian.

Letting God Rule the Life (32).

At the Nashville Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, the Rev. W. M. Forrest, formerly of Calcutta, told of a young man he had met in India, who, after his conversion to Christianity, had been harshly treated and cruelly persecuted, his wife and little child taken from him, and his home closed upon him. Yet for seven years he had faithfully preached the gospel of Jesus until body and mind began to weaken and the light of reason began to waver. One night, altogether beside himself, he had gone out into the night, and Mr. Forrest followed him. There in the moonlight, beating his head against the earth, according to the manner of the heathen, he found the young fellow, and the thought came to him, "Is it possible that in his frenzy he has gone back to the worship of his old-time god?" But on drawing closer he saw him lifting his clasped hands to the darkness, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, the choking words of his prayer were heard distinctly, and this was his cry: "I have made Jesus King, I have made Jesus King." There was a man faithful even unto the death.—S. S. Times.

Christ Desires Our Companionship (33).

Christ desires our companionship, as he has daily been the delight of his Father and associated in all his operations (Prov. viii. 30; John xvii. 4, 5, 24). He regards us with complaisance. There is in us no good thing, but he has already given us of his graces, and will change us into his image from glory to glory. He is the brightness of the Father's glory; and he delights in our obedience. It is very imperfect; but he notices our will and effort to do good, our resistance of temptation, and our patience under crosses and afflictions. His Father loved him because he was obedient unto death.

Nothing can separate us from this love of Christ. But we must be conscious of it and respond to it. "Continue ye in my love." Desire close intimacy with Christ. Seek conformity to his image, and crave his approbation in every act. "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."—J. A. Hodge.

Renewing the Walk Each Morning (34).

Oh! that our new-born piety every morning might match with our new-born "mercies!" Oh! that we could perceive, each morning, all the dear faces that meet us—the familiar affections, and all that nature paints, and all the happiness which bestrews our path—and all God's forgiveness, and all God's favors, and promises, and God's presence—as "new" things to be taken, to be studied, to be admired, to be echoed back in praises and homage—just as a star new created! A creation! a creation for me! We shall best take our reflection of God, and be like him, if we are always trying to go on, every day, to some "new" thing; some "new" attainment in the divine life; some "new" work done and dedicated to him; each "new" morning finding its echo in a "new" trait of holiness! And, oh! what a standard we should set! To what heights we should reach before the year is over!—J. Vaughan.

No False Steps (35).

"Sincere and without offense." The word translated "sincere," Donnegan tells us in his Lexicon, is a combination of two words which, taken together, mean "found pure and unadulterated when examined in the sun; cleansed from heterogeneous parts by exposure to its rays.'" It means, therefore, proved by sunlight. The derivation of the other words, "without offense," is equally significant. It is in Greek one word, meaning "to jolt or to strike the foot against; to make a false step." sincere and without offense. He whose actions will stand the test of the sunlight of God's truth and the scrutiny of him who is light, and in whom dwelleth no darkness at all; he who shall so walk as not to make a false step himself or cause others to stumble over him, must approach very near the standard of a perfect man. See Psalms 1 and 15.—Selected.

IV. SAVED BY FAITH.

"And He Believed in the Lord; and He Counted It to Him for Righteousness." Genesis 15:6.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In preaching upon this righteousness which God imputes to the believer when he sees his faith, Spurgeon said: Now, if I wished to test you all, and might ask you only one question, I would ask this: What is your righteousness? Now come along in single file. What is your righteousness? O, I am as good as my neighbors. Go along with you; you are not my comrade. What is your righteousness? Well, I am What a lofty ideal of Christian character the two combined present—saith the Lord." I can forgive all those other minor things, if you san rather better than my neighbors, for I go to chapel regularly. Off with you, sir; you do not know the watchword. And you next; what is your righteousness? I have been baptized, and am a member of the church. Yes, and so you may be; and if that is your hope, you are in the gall of bitterness. Now, you next; what is your hope? O, I do all I can, and Christ makes up the rest. Rubbish! You are a Babylonian, you are no Israelite; Christ is no make-weight—away with you. Here comes the last. What is your righteousness? My righteousness is filthy rags, except one righteousness which I have, which Christ wrought out for me on Calvary, imputed to me by God himself, which makes me pure and spotless as an angel. Ah, brother, you and I are fellow-soldiers; I have found you out; that is the watchword. "Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." I do not ask whether you are Churchmen, or whether you are Methodists, or Independents, or Baptists, if you do but know this watchword—"Your righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." I can forgive all those other minor things, if you can sing—

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

Tell me you have got any other trust, and I will have nothing to do with you. Tell me you can work out your own salvation, and I will not acknowledge you for a brother. But if you tell me that from first to last you rely on Jesus, then I acknowledge you as a fellow-soldier; and I am glad to see you wherever I meet you.

Abraham Believed God.

1. Whom else should we believe with reference to the things of the spiritual world? "To whom shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life."

2. Why should we not believe him? His trustworthiness has been proven again and again.

3. All of his attributes call for our faith. Omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Faith in the Pulpit (36).

The main trouble with the church today is not in the pews, it is in the pulpit. There is more Christian faith in the average congregation than there is in the average preacher. During the short period of Emerson's pastorate, he was obliged to call on an old man who was dying. The young minister murmured apologetically a number of confused and clumsy commonplaces, and finally his aged client cried sharply, "Young man, if you don't know your business, you had better go home." Emerson, who came to give advice, took it, like the honest and sincere man that he was; and he had no peace until he left the church for good and all. He was totally unfitted to be a minister because he had no Christian faith, and as soon as he realized his unfitness, he sought another occupation, and became enormously useful to humanity in other ways.

A United States Senator met three clergymen in three different parts of the country, and each complained that he could not get a large audience. The Senator asked the first man if he believed that the Bible was the word of God; the cleric smiled pityingly, and said that of course he did not in the crude and ordinary sense, and then he launched a mass of vague metaphysical phrases.

The Senator asked the second man if he believed in the future life, and the reverend gentleman said that he did not believe in personal immortality, but that the essence of life was indestructible, or some such notion.

The Senator asked the third man, a pastor of an orthodox evangelical church, if he believed in the divinity of Jesus Christ; the shepherd of souls replied that all men were divine. The three clergymen had themselves supplied abundant reasons why their audiences were small. They had nothing to offer them but wind. The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.—William Lyon Phelps.

Faith and Feeling (37).

I was preaching in Manchester, England, some years ago. One Sabbath afternoon, I was short of workers, and there were a good many inquiring the way of Life. I took some into the first gallery, and after I had spoken five or ten minutes, a gentleman came up, a business man, and stood on the outskirts of the company.

"My friend, are you not a Christian?"

"No. I wish I was," he replied.

"Then," I said, "I'll speak to you and try to make the way plain to you, and if you can see it, perhaps the others may see it."

I addressed my remarks to him. After I had used one or two illustrations, I said, "Now, do you see it?"

"No. It is not clear. It doesn't help my case."

I gave a number of other passages. "Does that make it plain?"

"No. That doesn't help my case." He was like most people who think their case a peculiar one.

I gave another and another illustration. Then he said, "The fact is that I can't feel that I'm saved."

I said, "Was it Noah's feelings that saved him, or the ark?"

"Good evening, Mr. Moody. It's all settled." And away he went.

I believe in quick work, but that was too quick for me. I wondered if the man did really see it. The next day I was looking for my "ark man." He wasn't around. One afternoon I was going down the back stairs of the Free Trade Hall of Manchester, and there wasn't much light. A man tapped me on the shoulder, and asked:

"Do you remember me?"

"I remember that voice, but I can't locate it," I said.

"Do you remember the man in the ark?"

I answered, "I've been looking for you."

He said, "That settled it all at once. I've been trying to save myself by my feelings, and trying to make an ark of my feelings, but the moment you spoke of the ark, that settled it." He continued: "Mr Moody, always tell of the ark."—Moody.

Only Believe (38).

There will be many whose whole experience will be merely this: that, hungry, needy, empty, wanting a Saviour, they just heard a voice from heaven telling them that the Saviour whom they needed had come, and they just went to him and found him all they wanted, and then like the poor shepherds, "made known abroad" to other men all that had come to them.—Phillips Brooks.

Simple Faith (39).

In that marvelous book, "Twice Born Men," one of the chapters is entitled, "The Lowest of the Low," and that is the name given to the man whose story is told in the chapter. His mother was a drunkard, his father was dead. When he was a baby his mother used to take him to the public house, and to keep him quiet she would dip her finger in the glass of gin and rub it across his lips, so that before he could walk he had the taste for strong drink. When he was but a little boy he was staggering drunk upon the streets of London. Besides being a drunkard, he was a thief. He was all that was bad.

In his young manhood he became a soldier in the British army, and while there he broke the laws of the army and was sentenced to prison. When he came out of prison he was discharged from the army in disgrace, and he then drifted into the very lowest depths of iniquity and sin. Finally, when he could bear his burden no longer, he came to the Salvation Army hall to listen to the hymns. He heard the testimonies, and he listened to the officer who stood upon the platform asking poor lost men and women to turn to Jesus. One night in the midst of a great crowd of fallen men like himself, he rose up and staggered to the penitent form. Dropping down on his knees, he buried his face in his hands, and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," and quick as a flash he was changed.

At once he began to seek for his old mother. At last he found her. When he entered the room where she lived, he found it little better than a hovel. He walked across the room, and putting his arms around his mother, he kissed her, and said, "Mother, I have come to take you back to the home I have prepared for you." She would not believe him. Her mind had become affected by her sin, but she went, pleased

as a girl. In God's own good time her mind was restored, and to this day in the city of London, she sits by her son's side, a changed woman, and presides at his table. When the people say to him, "What does it all mean?" He always makes this reply, "God gave me another chance." Oh, what a salvation, what a Saviour! I know if he can save that man, he can save me.—Chapman.

Faith Not Works (40).

We are not saved for the good that we have done. Our salvation depends solely upon the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Dr. John B. Devins told of a man who dreamed that he constructed a ladder from earth toward heaven, and whenever he did a good deed his ladder went up two feet; when he did an unusually good deed his ladder went higher; when he gave away large sums of money to the poor it went still higher. After a while it went out of sight, and as the years rolled on he expected at his death to step off that ladder into heaven. But in his dream he heard a voice thunder from the skies: "He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Down the man came, ladder and all; and he awoke. He realized then his mistake and sought salvation in the only way—faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ.—Selected.

Faith is Possible (41).

The command to believe is not a mockery, but a command, because it is possible for every man to believe if he will. It is not possible for us to understand everything or even to understand any thing fully, but it is possible for us to face the light and not the darkness. So Plato taught in regard to immortality twenty-three centuries ago. One should believe in it because that faith was so much better than the other. And so Christ said, "If any man wills to do the will of God he shall know of the doctrine, whether I speak from God or whether I speak of myself."—Corwin.

Believing in Spite of Appearances (42).

The "Letters of Marcus Dods" tell of his bitter experience in enduring more than five years' waiting between his being licensed by the Presbytery and getting a church. In one of these letters he likens himself to the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda who, when the Angel gave healing virtue to the water, was unable because of his handicap to avail himself of his opportunity. But, says Dods significantly, "One thing I did not do, I did not throw mud at the Angel." In other words, he did not gird at circumstances, nor fling gibes at the omissions of Providence. With every fibre of his brain and will did he dig into the ores of knowledge, saying to himself: "A church I may never get, but if I do, I will be ready for the church." And when waiting had done its work, Providence opened up to him the mighty purpose for which he had been girded. The God who kept Marcus Dods waiting those trying years was the God who made him "chief among the brethren."

If we can wait, as well as do; if we bring the fire and the wood, God will provide the lamb for the burnt offering. Believe this, and believing, leave the final issue with him

Faith is the Victory That Overcomes the World (43).

In "Twice Born Men" the author tells of a Salvation Army officer who was known as the "Angel Adjutant." One day in her wanderings through the slums she came to a man who was known as "Old Born Drunk." This man used to go into the factories, selling little sheets of paper giving the betting news from the public houses round about. The Angel Adjutant had always been accustomed to sinful men, but she says until she saw him she did not realize the hideous and repulsive abomination to which vice can degrade. This man was the child of drunken parents. He was conceived and born while his parents were mad with drink. When he first opened his eyes they taught him to drink. When but a baby boy he used to sleep off his drunken stupor. When a boy able to walk he used to stagger through the streets in an intoxicated condition. He was short and thick-set in stature, misshapen in face and form. One day the Angel Adjutant met him, and looking into his old, sin-scarred face, said, "You don't look very happy." He made no response. She came a little closer, and said again, "You don't look very happy." Still no response. She came closer still, and putting her hand upon his shoulder, said, "I would like to help you. I love Jesus. Jesus loves you," and there was a trace of a tear in his eye.

She found out where he lived, and she went into his home that was vile in the extreme. His wife was as a great a drunkard as he. They had a son, but this little boy was kept away from the home, so that he, too, might not become a drunkard. One night they made their way, at the request of the Angel Adjutant, to the Salvation Army meeting. They heard the testimonies, and, still drunk, they staggered to the penitent form, and got down on their knees. A man called Joe had just risen to give a testimony, and "Old Born Drunk" knew him. And while still on his knees the man called out, "Oh, Jesus, I would like to be like Joe." Then turning his face to his wife, he said, "Do you think I could ever be like Joe?" And the Angel Adjutant, coming nearer, said, "Jesus can make you like Joe." And the old man rose up, staggering from weakness, and said, "Then I will take him." His life became perfectly beautiful, though his temptations were terrific. One day his business called him to a public house, and the men there tempted him to drink. When "Old Born Drunk" refused to take the liquor they jeered and mocked him. But he was unmoved and said to the Angel Adjutant later, "I am without flaw." Faith made him the victor over temptation.

Why Men Fail to See Visions (44).

I once heard the great orator of the nineteenth century make a speech in which occurred a passage which is now quoted as classic; and talking about it afterwards with one who was present at the meeting, he answered quite frankly, "I was not listening at the moment; the truth is, I was calculating how much machinery the building would hold."—Shepherd.

V. THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

"Certainly I Will Be With Thee." Exodus 3:12.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett in preaching on "Our Unseen Allies," said: Turn to these co-operative allies. When the sower casts his seed into the ground other hands lay hold of it. When we do our work in the field of the kingdom glorious allies take up our work, and they are continuing and perfecting our ministry. Who are these allies?

I. There is the Almighty and Eternal God. Recall some of the ways by which his ministry is described in the Scriptures. There is a favorite name by which he is known. He is spoken of as the Spirit, the Breath of Life. Here is a name significant of an atmospheric influence, a Presence that creates a fruitful, moral climate. We know the quickening or the paralyzing influence of the spirit of man upon man. The spirit of man can have a most deadening influence upon the thoughts and purposes of others, or it can minister to their strength. Now, God's spirit works upon the field of Christian service like an all-pervasive and influential air. Sometimes that Spirit is invigorative, quickening, and the sacred seed is vitalized and nutrified. The seed of truth we sow in the soil of man's mind is kept alive; memory retains the holy thing. But sometimes the breath of the Lord is destructive, meeting with deadly hostility the secret enemies of the truth. We are told that there are certain bacteria whose presence in the soil is destructive to the life and growth of the seed, and the aim of the agriculturists is to get rid of these bacteria, so that the incipient life may have a favorable way. And there are evil bacteria in the souls of men, and they are hostile to the seeds of truth. God's destructive breath is our ally in the business of harvest. These pests wither "because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon them." We have a mighty ally in the deadly breath of God.

II. But we have not only our supreme ally in God. We have also, through God, mystic and invisible ministers always working in the field of the Kingdom. Everywhere in the Scriptures these ministers are busily active in the affairs of men. When we are resting they are toiling; when we are sleeping they are at work. Their ministry is like that of Ariel in The Tempest, a mysterious, invisible friend, binding evil and emancipating good. "He will give his angels charge over thee." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." "There stood by me this night the angel of God." "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that establish the ways of salvation?"

III. Now, in the face of all this, what shall we do? Do not let us assume that when we stop working the work itself stops; that when the sower has gone to sleep everything else is at rest. In all our work in the different fields—in the field of the family, of education, of social service, in all the crusades for the enrichment of political freedom, in all our means to proclaim the glory and sovereignty of the Prince of

Peace, let us assume that we have mighty allies at our side. Let us quietly and strongly believe it. We shall not work the less intensely, but rather with greater confidence, and with vastly multiplied force. We shall not move about the field with the nervousness of those who fear defeat or failure, but with the magnificent confidence of those who know their holy strength, for whom the scent of the harvest is in the air, and who already see the reaper bringing in the sheaves.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Secret of Strength (45).

What made Jesus Christ so brave and strong? Was it not this, that he was always seeing God? We think it strange that Jesus could stand so bravely before the Pharisees and the Romans and feel no fear. Was it strange, if the Father was closer to him than the Romans and Pharisees all the while and hid them from him; if the trumpets and the chariots upon the mountains were so loud in his ears that he could not hear the clatter of the hosts upon the plains? Our Pharisees are so much nearer and closer to us than our Father. The secret of courage is so simple after all.—Phillips Brooks.

Realized Littleness and Appropriated Greatness (46).

Caesar tells of the contempt with which the Gauls regarded the little men Rome sent against them, and of their wonder that these little men built such large machines. But little men are likely to feel their need of the help of machines. Their sense of weakness quickens their inventive faculties. Rome's greatness began in her littleness. A little city in a position not very well suited for defense, and surrounded by enemies on every side, she was compelled to excel her neighbors in the art of war or perish.

What happens in the great world happens in the little world, the individual life. In every great crisis the soul is aroused, the mind becomes alert, the body itself seems possessed of new powers. The greatest crisis of life is failure, actual or imminent. When old resources fail and new powers must be found, the soul often finds itself possessed of resources it had not expected. So it happens that a hundred geniuses are born of adversity where one is born of prosperity. For a like reason the door of the kingdom of God is open to the poor in spirit.—Selected.

The Men Who See God (47).

A recent writer has said that the classification of men with regard to religion will have to be changed soon. We shall not divide them into Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters, Presbyterians and Methodists, but into the men who see and the men who do not see. I ask a friend, Do you believe in God? and he is almost indignant at the question. But when I press him and get him to tell me something of this God, he describes to me the God of David, speaks of the God of Paul, grows eloquent over the God of covenanting or disruption times; or else he takes me into the distant future and speaks of the love and joy and peace of heaven, when the shadows are gone and the night is fled away. But when I ask him, What is your life tonight? What of

this city's sin and cry tonight? I find that for the world's yesterday and for the world's tomorrow he believes, but for tonight he is an atheist. Once there were horses and chariots of fire, and there shall be again. But today there is nothing but the hills and moorlands, and the Assyrian army in the valley. Oh, it is very hard to see God in today. It needs an opening of the eyes, like Elisha's servant got, to catch the trend of the everlasting love in the petty transactions of the present hour.—G. H. Morrison, D. D.

God and I (48).

I plucked an acorn from the greensward, and held it to my ear, and this is what it says to me: "By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I will furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I will provide warmth for the home in the pleasant fire. By and by I will be shelter from the storm to those who have gone under the roof. By and by I will be the strong ribs of the great vessel, and the tempest will beat against me in vain, while I carry men across the Atlantic." "O foolish little acorn, wilt thou be all this?" I ask. And the acorn answers, "Yes, God and I."—Abbott.

When God Works With Men (49).

God is present in human affairs. Instances, the Spanish Armada; Napoleon's campaign against Moscow, where, on "one memorable night of frost, twenty thousand horses perished and the strength of the French army was utterly broken." Here God used the snow and the cold, as he may have used the pestilence or the simoom to destroy Sennacherib. Victor Hugo attributes the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo to a few drops of rain, more or less, which in the early morning made the roads unfit for the movement of artillery. Providence, he thus claims, defeated "the man of destiny."—Selected.

Heavenly Reinforcements (50).

There is, as the fundamental power, the truth that God is: that the Almighty, the Jehovah, the Heavenly Father, now lives and works and loves. Perhaps we do not think of it often in this way. Yet, after all, it is the assurance of God's existence that is our deepest and final support. Cut it out from your life, and what have you but chaos? Bring it into your life, not as commonplace, but as a vital truth, and you have this, that as God is Truth, and Love, and Wisdom, you have, if you abide in God's presence, the whole power of Truth, Love, and Wisdom to back you.

Again, there is the fact that the Son of God once walked this earth and that he lived a spotless life; and, having tasted for man all the sufferings and ills common to men, and having conquered sin and death, now lives, and sitting on the right hand of the Father, is forever the type of the perfect humanity, and the inspiration to all men to live as in his presence. Imagine for a moment, if you can, the facts and the power of the life of Jesus cut out, eliminated from history and modern civilization, and from the lives of men, and what have you of character and moral fibre and all that goes to make up the best of humanity? The fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God is, however, a truth from which

the world has only begun to draw. There are infinite possibilities still unfathomed. The truth of the brooding of the Holy Spirit over the lives of men, and of his waiting to touch them with the fire of divine love, has hardly yet been explored. There are, too, those mysterious beings and powers, ten thousand times ten thousand angels and archangels, all ministering spirits. Whatever your theory may be about them, they stand for heavenly, spiritual forces waiting to come to the aid of men.—Bishop William Lawrence.

Our Divine Ally (51).

A little child of three or four years was taken down into the heart of a great city, one day, by a relative who was on a shopping expedition. The thronged sidewalks, and especially the crowded streets, with their stream of traffic—cars, automobiles and horses pressing upon each other continually—greatly interested the baby, and she told of it on her return.

"Weren't you afraid to go across among all those things?" she was asked.

"No," she answered serenely. "The big p'liceman just held up his hand, and all the folks and horses waited while Charlotte went over."

To her childish thought it was all for Charlotte—just a moment of enforced quiet that one little girl might pass safely. It was all she needed to know, and practically it was true. We older ones, bewildered and often sore troubled by all the whirl of life about us, the cares and problems of the world that press us on every hand, might learn a lesson of comfort from the little one's faith and confidence. However alarming and hopeless the outlook may seem, things are never beyond the control of the Power that keeps watch over all. For the soul that trusts in him God will make a safe path, day by day, amid all the turmoil and perplexities, a quiet place where we may walk unafraid.

The Law of the Sudden Leap (52).

And what is the Renaissance, but the sudden leap of the intellect fixed into permanent literature! What is the art movement in Florence but the law of the sudden leap fixed in the masterpieces! What is the reformation in Germany and England but the law of the sudden leap in conscience, making a nation to be born in a day! What is the meaning of the age of Columbus, with a thousand boats soon exploring every harbor, but the birth of a new continent! What is this world enthusiasm over aviation but the sudden mastery of the air! What wonders God hath wrought! No one knows what shall happen in this country, because no man can foresee what great man may be born tomorrow, what prophet may be set in the market-place, what voices may fall through the open rift in the sky, what sword may be sharpened against oppression and tyranny. Are you thinking of the politicians, forswearing their great convictions for office; of writers, mixing the dross of lies with the gold of truth to sell their wares? Are you thinking of the worship of success, the hypnotic power of wealth, the stolidity of the middle class, the grossness of the pampered few, the hopelessness of the poor, the restlessness in the palaces, the sullenness in the tenements, the godlessness and the hopelessness of millions? Oh, the

page can be made as black as can be woven out of the warp and the woof of man's despair, and selfishness and sin! But wait! One beam of light pierces the eastern sky. God enters the arena. He is fully equal to the emergency. The scales fall from the man's eyes, the youth meets his vision, and the nation is born in a day.—Newell Dwight Hillis, D.D.

God Within and About Us (53).

Spurgeon once said that a bird when it is sitting on its eggs, or when the little ones are newly hatched, has about it a mother spirit, so that it devotes all of its life to the feeding of its little ones; other birds may be taking their pleasures on the wing, but this bird sits still, the livelong day and night, or its only flights are to provide for gaping mouths which seem to be never filled. A passion has taken possession of the bird; and something like it comes over the true soul-winner. He would gladly die to win souls; he pines, he pleads, he plods to bless those on whom his heart is set. If these could be saved, he would pawn half his heaven for it; aye, and sometimes, in moments of enthusiasm, he is ready to barter heaven altogether to win souls. Give us a passion like that in this church, so that we all feel that all our work connected with the church, Sunday and week day, fails of its supreme purpose unless it is redeeming the lost; unless it is winning back men and women who are in danger of eternal defeat, and nothing can stand in the way of our spiritual conquest.—Banks.

Helpless But Mighty (54).

Several years ago a Chinese woman brought a slave girl to a Christian hospital in Canton. This girl was blind, as the social outcasts of China often are, but was also going lame, and so might become useless to her owner. The doctors said amputation of one leg was necessary. Whereupon the owner decamped, abandoning her human property. The girl worked about the place, but at length had a new sorrow added to her already heavy load by the discovery of signs of leprosy upon her. Blind, lame, diseased, she departed to be segregated in a colony of similar unfortunates. Yet she departed not as she came. While in the hospital, the love of those about her had won her to Christ. And in the leper colony she told others of the great love that had come to her. In two years she had a group of leper Christians about her. In five years she had a leper church. Today she is a center of grateful Christian life and service.—Brooklyn Eagle.

What God Can Do With and Through Men (55).

The Bible has accounts of many lives made over. In the Old Testament, we find Jacob, the supplanter, the great by name and also by nature; but when he is in the grip of the angel of the Lord, and the angel wrestles with him, he limps away from the angelic embrace, and to power, and, instead of Jacob the Supplanter, he is Israel the Prince.

Elijah, in the same Old Testament, was a man of like passions with ourselves; but his passions, controlled, were like the very steeds to the chariot which came from heaven to be his escort into the heavenly city.

St. Paul, in the New Testament, bitter as a persecutor, thirsting for the blood of those who believed in the Nazarene, consenting to the death of St. Stephen and persecuting Christians unto strange cities, becomes as gentle as a woman and glories in the fact that he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

St. Peter, who was in other days a man of weakness, ignorance and failure, becomes the mighty preacher of the sermon on Pentecost and is the writer of superb epistles; and what God can do for Jacob and Elijah, St. Paul and St. Peter, he can do for you and do for me.

If our lives were completely yielded to our great Master, the whole world would be charmed by the beauty and power of the Christian life. Then we would be victorious in the time of trial, for even though the nights were dark and the burdens heavy we could hear him say, "Fear not, I am with thee," "Thou art mine," "My grace is sufficient for thee." —Chapman.

VI. THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE LEADS TO THE GOAL OF PROSPERITY.

"Oh that there were such a heart in them that they would fear me . . . that it might be well with them."—Deuteronomy 5:29.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Just as it is the long run that tests in the fullest degree the real merits of the participants in a race, so it is with life. Many things which go well for a season come to grief if the test is protracted. That alone has the stamp of genuineness which endures all climes and times. In the long run, honesty, righteousness, and truth pay best. Villainy may flourish for a while, and the false may appear to triumph, but the triumph is transitory. God's steps are slow, but they who attend his movements are never disappointed. In the long run, character carries the day. Men come eventually to be known for what they are, however appearances may mislead at first. Injustice will be defeated, and wrongs will be righted all in good time. In the long run, the worlding will be seen to be a simpleton, and he who humbly trusts in God will be proved a sage. Foolish are they who leave eternity out of the reckoning. That is really the "long run," in comparison with which all else is but a step, a moment. Blessed are they who build that thought into every part of their lives, and rule their behavior strictly by it.—Selected.

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Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, D. D., said on this subject: Time teaches us—in fact compels us—to put new meaning into our words; and I hold it true to say, that a good man may prosper in all he doeth, and yet hardly succeed in anything, if we mean by success what the world ordi narily does mean by it. There are failures that are victories, and there are successes which an honest man would rather be without. Before we conclude that a thing is worth its price, we must consider well its cost. We may know the price of a thing and not its value. Success has to do with the price, prosperity with the value. When a man betters his circumstances, puts money in his purse, wins public recognition, at the expense of upright character, he may be justified on his level in calling it success; but no wise onlooker would call it prosperity.

* * *

Dr. L. A. Banks wrote:

Youth is full of the possibilities of education and enlargement. Its horizon is almost limitless, if the soul is given up to goodness. If a man wants to be a mechanic, or a merchant, or a physician, or a lawyer, or a minister, or a journalist, he begins in youth. It is essential to all high success in the trade or the profession that he shall take advantage of youth's glorious possibilities. How much more so if we want to make of life a tower of strength for goodness, if we want to make strong the foundations of a lighthouse to shine abroad the light of the Lord Jesus Christ! Childhood is immeasurably more impressionable than youth, and in turn youth is far more easily impressed than manhood. As hot

wax receives the impression of the stamp and retains it long, so the mind of the young may be stamped by the character of God and carry it always, a beneficent blessing to all who may read it. If one comes to the Lord Jesus Christ in his youth and gives his very heart to him, every relation of life that he takes on is leavened with the gracious influence of the presence of Christ. Such a life will stand the test of time and eternity.

There used to be an old, battered safe standing on Broadway, New York, on which was this sign: "It stood the test, the contents were all saved." It had been in one of the hottest fires New York ever saw, but the old safe had carried its treasure safely through it all, and delivered every scrap of paper it contained unharmed to its owner. So you may put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and know that he will be faithful, and bring you out safe in the end with everything committed to his care. No life is so safe as that which is guided and controlled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Even Temporal Welfare is Promoted by the Fear of the Lord (56).

Christian people, as a direct result of becoming Christian, accumulate property. Every social group has a communal intellectual life. It has leaders in the various departments of mental effort, but these leaders are only possible because of the general stimulus that they find in their surroundings. The message of Jesus has been the greatest single intellectual stimulus that the world has ever known. It would be a childish mistake to suppose that the force of it is expended in theology. It finds expression in literature, art, music, philosophy, economics, politics and sociology. The greatest races easily accepted Christianity because it was something they could coherently think about. Its great ideas are registered in increased mental power. So the Christian nations became rich.

Great revivals of religion show how the multitude when quickened in spirit are also illuminated in intelligence and strengthened in virtue. So John Wesley's disciples were scarcely converted before they began to save money. The poor who become religious begin to be prosperous. The Salvation Army is able to show this with its converted men, and has prepared them for heaven by making them fit for earth. When a man ceases to be a drunkard and a loafer and becomes self-respecting and self-supporting, there is a visible miracle of grace. Christianity is not the enemy of property, but is the most influential agent in its accumulation.

When Jesus taught his followers to give to the poor, he implied that he thought they would have something to give. The monastic exaltation of poverty in the early Church and the sordid praise of it in modern times, often by those who are not poor, ignore the plain facts that poverty is only occasionally a misfortune; that it is often immoral and sometimes a disgrace.

On the other hand, it seems scarcely necessary to say that some fortunes are larger than either honesty or intelligence would warrant. There are other forms of stealing besides larceny and burglary. We are

doubtless coming to a time when the control of wealth will be more rigidly under law. It may be we can come to a time when very large accumulations of wealth may be discouraged by graduated taxation, or by taking a portion of the property of the dead for public purposes. Personally, I doubt the wisdom of many of the proposed economic reforms. Unusual rewards for unusual industry and capacity are useful to human progress. The sanctity of private property, justly and lawfully acquired, is one of the great Anglo-Saxon traditions.—The Congregationalist.

Conduces to Happiness (57).

All the precepts of religion conduce, incidentally, to our temporal happiness. Not a single practice enjoined by the church requires an impossibility or entails a sacrifice of our health, or peace or our prosperity. The observance of Sunday does not lessen the products of industry; on the contrary, actually seems to increase them. So that from mere motives of selfishness, employers have found it good policy to induce their workingmen to observe the Sabbath day. Then we are not to overlook the happiness which the recreation of the first day of the week means to mankind in all conditions. Our lives would be worn out much sooner but for the saving grace of this day. And life is not entirely a matter of labor; mankind has not been sentenced to the galleys nor doomed by natural law to incessant toil.—Selected.

The Testimony of Economists (58).

Expert economists tell us that the cause of hard times lies deeper than the tariff or the currency. It is found in waste. This will hardly be denied. But where is there such waste as in our sins and follies? "An increase of one-tenth in demand is sufficient to change adversity into prosperity, but this country spends every year more than one-tenth of its product in drink alone. Who can measure what it would mean to our industries if the billion dollars we thus squander each year were spent for shoes and food and houses? Factories would be running overtime and then still swamped in orders. New York has been wailing of late over the thousands of her people who go to bed hungry, yet last year she spent at Coney Island, her great playground, forty-five million dollars, or three times what the nation paid Napoleon for Louisiana and six times what we paid for Alaska. Thus what we waste in our sins and our follies far exceeds what we lack in necessities and comforts."—Selected.

The Penalty of Unfaithfulness (59).

Every nation that has disobeyed God, has grown proud, rich, arrogant; that has trampled upon the holy law of God, has perished. Where is Egypt today, once mighty, in wealth, in all national resources? Where is Assyria, the threshing instrument with which God disciplined Israel? Her magnificent capital, hoary with age and bloody with crime, slept for the long centuries buried in forgetfulness, until the spade has recently uncovered the skeleton. The Medo-Persian power has passed away. Rome perished, died of moral decay, after having enriched herself with the treasures of this world. The culture and art of Greece could not preserve the life of that nation.

The habitable world is marred with the burial places of the nations

that have not known, or have forgotten, God. And from their silent resting places comes the voice of admonition: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."—Wishard.

How He Gained Not Lost (60).

Some years ago a successful lawyer in an Indiana city told me he became a Christian just as he was beginning practice. "What do you want to be so foolish for? You'll spoil your business," was the warning of a friend, the proprietor of a saloon. "Be a Christian if you will, but keep quiet about it. No one wants a Christian lawyer." The lawyer did not keep it quiet. His practice grew. The saloonkeeper, however, gave his work to an atheist practicing near-by—until he wanted to make his will. Then he sent for the Christian lawyer. "I want a Christian for this work," he said. "I must have a man on whom I can depend."

Piety and Prosperity (61).

Everything you do to elevate the moral and religious tone of the community adds dollars to your city and value to your property and power to your commercial interests; and everything you do in a political way that lowers the moral tone of your people or casts a reflection upon the moral life of your city, depreciates your values and brings financial disaster. You can not serve God and mammon.—M. A. Matthews.

God Takes Care of His Servants (62).

Billy Bray, the Cornish miner, whose rugged piety has been a blessing to so many, says that one year his crop of potatoes turned out so poorly that when he was digging them, Satan, at his elbow, said, "There, Billy, isn't that poor pay for serving your Father the way you have all the year? Just see those small potatoes!" He stopped digging, and replied, "Ah, Satan, at it again; talking against my Father, bless his name! Why, when I served you I did not get any potatoes at all. What are you talking about?" And on he went digging and praising the Lord for small potatoes.—Ram's Horn.

Grounded In Obedience (63).

The hard tests come to every life. The elemental forces of human experience, the wind and the rain, the stream and the flood, threaten the life structure of each one of us. The various temptations, subtle and powerful, the heavy burdens of responsibility, which cause men to stagger, the bitter disappointments which beat the dearest purposes we cherish, the shock of adversity or of bereavement which causes the very foundations of our hope to tremble, all these experiences come steadily to the children of men. And the tested lives stand or fall as they have or have not been grounded in obedience to principles, as they have or have not come to grip the fundamental realities.—Chas. R. Brown.

Obedience the Remedy (64).

Many a break-down which is attributed to nerves or overwork is a religious matter. The soul has been injured, and every individual process has shown the result. The physician, as things are, cannot go

into the question of the patient's personal faith or religious life. We have shut those things into one water-tight compartment and the physical life into another. But the life is one, and damage done to the soul goes all through. The trouble with many lives all centers in something which they never speak of, and there are thousands of cases of men and women who are now in a physically deteriorating condition who would find peace and health and power coming back to them with a fortnight's old-fashioned and persistent obedience to the laws of prayer and trust and obedience. But so long as they can think it is all and only physical, they can lay off upon the body everything that is wrong. There are bodies which have been made sick and weak, not by injury or disease, but by the steady influence upon them of a spirit which would not obey its laws as the body was willing to obey its own.—S. S. Times.

VII. THE SAFETY OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

"The Eternal God Is Thy Refuge and Underneath Are The Everlasting Arms."—Deut. 33:27.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. He is the "eternal" God in contrast with earthly friends who are themselves subject to earth's mutations.

II. This "refuge" means a dwelling place for protection to homeless wanderers. You find practically the same thought in Psa. 90:1; 91:9, and in Heb. 1:12. God is not only in heaven (above) watching over, but he is on earth (below "underneath") supporting, sustaining.

III. "The everlasting arms" with their omnipotent, all-loving embrace, never weary and are of measureless strength and endurance. They carry, keep from stumbling, sustain his weak and road-worn children. They never fail. "For he who keepeth Israel slumbers not nor sleeps," is the refrain which sounds out from St. Paul's chimes throughout the London night, far above the heads of the populace. The child of God is safe and secure even amid threatening perils.—Selected.

* * *

We are "kept by the power of God." We are assured that he who keepeth the sparrows will much more certainly keep us.

God's providence is universal. "His kingdom ruleth over all." He can govern all only by controlling each. He manages the stream, because he presides at the fountain. God's providence is minute and specific. Great doors swing on small hinges. God's very greatness enables him to care for the little; only the Infinite can pay attention to infinitesimals. It is "trifles that make perfection." Telescopes reveal the magnitude of God's creation; microscopes, the minuteness of his care. God's providence is beneficent. "All things work together for good." "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." Even the wrath of man is made to subserve God's beneficent purpose. "All things are yours." "Fire and hail; snow and vapor; stormy wind, fulfilling his word." "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end." "Trust in the Lord."—Sanders.

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I. Faith flees to an eternal refuge. This is conversion.

II. God upholds with everlasting arms. This is the secret of Christian endurance. My appraisal of my spiritual assets is the measure of my confidence and strength. 1. The eternal God is my refuge. The everlasting arms are underneath—whether faith remembers or unbelief forgets. 2. But my peace of mind, my calm assurance will be determined by the clearness with which I apprehend the blessed fact.

* * *

God Our Home—The word "refuge" may be translated "mansion," or "abiding-place," which gives the thought that God is our abode, our home. There is a great sweetness in this metaphor, for very dear to

our hearts is our home. 1. It is at home that we feel safe; we shut the world out, and dwell in quiet security. So with God "we fear no evil." 2. At home, we take our rest. So our hearts find rest in God. 3. At home, also, we let our hearts loose: we are not afraid of being misunderstood. So we may freely commune with God. 4. Home is the place of our truest and purest happiness. It is in God that our hearts find their deepest delight. 5. It is for home that we work and labor. So must we work for God.—Spurgeon.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Helpless But Secure (65).

Bella Cook in New York was left a widow at twenty-seven. At thirty-five she became bedridden, an absolute pauper so far as this world can see. If you had added up her financial resources, you would not have found ten cents. She had not physical strength enough to walk across the room. But she was rich in the unsearchable riches of Christ. There were no walls of money or physical power about her, but God was about her, the wall of fire, and within her, irradiating her face, speaking peace and triumph to her soul; he was the glory in the midst. She was bedridden for fifty-two years, and for all that half a century she was one of the greatest personalities in New York. Women worth millions in this world's gold often left their carriages standing in front of her humble rooms, and pillowed their heads on her bed and sobbed out their hearts while Bella Cook prayed for them. She became the center of a great charitable work. Through the money God sent she reached out into the cellars and byways of the poorest sections of a great wicked city with streams of blessing, and for over half a century, as a sort of illustration of the divine power to beautify a helpless life, God made her existence a perpetual inspiration to faith in him.—Banks.

Consciously Kept (66).

The natives of Cawnpore used to say of Henry Martyn, "God is shining in that man's face." Do you wonder that he was an interpreter to them of heavenly power when he could write in his diary, "My principal enjoyment is the enjoyment of God's presence?" They only can point out the heavenly powers who have themselves had the vision, who know the enjoyment of God's presence. Elisha could make the young man see the horses and chariots of fire round about because he himself saw them.—Selected.

Protected Against All Harm (67).

Pepys' Diary describes a visit that the writer paid to a shepherd on Epsom Downs. "We took notice of his woolen-knit stockings of two colors, mixed, and of his feet shod with iron shoes, both at the toes and heels, and with great nails in the soles of his feet, which was mighty pretty; and, taking notice of them, 'Why,' says the poor man, 'the downs, you see, are full of stones, and we are faine to shoe ourselves thus: and these,' says he, 'will make the stones fly till they sing before me.'" Is not this a figure of the enduement of the saints, and of their triumphant progress on the heavenly road? Verily, by virtue of the divine power

with which they are endowed, they not only progress toward the goal, but they "make the stones fly till they sing before them."

This grace prevails when the path is rough and thorny, when it can be followed only with sore or bleeding feet. The human lot is often felt to be cruel; it taxes even heroism to the uttermost to sustain it. How precious, then, in these days is that interior light, confidence, and peace with which the loyal soul is inspired! Instead of being bruised or broken by the savage angles of the ugly stones which thickly strew all the way, the pilgrim "makes the stones fly till they sing before him." Ah! even the cruelest stones of all—the grave-stones—as everyone may see who makes a tour of the churchyard. The promise is triumphantly realized.—W. L. Watkinson.

The Love of God (68).

Like a cradle rocking, rocking,
Silent, peaceful to and fro,
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping
On the little face below—
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,
Jarless, noiseless, safe and slow,
Falls the light of God's face bending
Down and watching us below.

And as feeble babes that suffer,
Toss and cry and will not rest
Are the ones the tender mother
Holds the closest, loves the best—
So when we are weak and wretched,
By our sins weighed down, distressed,
Then it is that God's great patience
Holds us closest, loves us best.

O great heart of God! whose loving
Cannot hindered be nor crossed,
Will not weary, will not even
In our death itself be lost—
Love divine! of such great loving
Only mothers know the cost—
Cost of love, which all love passing,
Gave a Son to save the lost.—Saxe Holm.

God's Mother-love (69).

The measure of greatness in any living thing is sensitiveness to suffering. A stone suffers not at all, it has no life. The oyster suffers a little, it has a single nerve. The bird is higher, and suffers for two or three days when its nest is robbed. Higher still the deer, that goes everywhither, moaning for its fawn, and whose suffering lasts for weeks. The Indian mother is higher, and remembers her babe through the summer and the winter. But what sensitiveness comes when the Christian mother appears! Her mother-love worships her babe almost as a form of divinity. One night she wrestles with the death-angel and is defeated

The years come and the years go, but still the memory of the child is with her. A half-century passes. Time avails not to cool the ardor of her love. But though a mother forgets her child, God doth not forget his sinning sons and daughters. Higher than a mother's and more sensitive is the heart of God.

The æolian harp is so sensitive that the softest zephyr wakens music among its strings. So there is no heartache, and no pain, and no cry of the transgressor, that does not touch the strings of sensitiveness and sympathy in the mind of God. For he who beholds his pilgrim band going across the years, stumbling, wandering, falling, bleeding, dying, follows each pilgrim heart with exquisite sympathy, and with infinite solicitude.

The angel of his providence goes before the prodigal son. The angel of his goodness encamps on the right hand; the angel of his bounty encamps on the left. The angels of his mercy follow after, to correct the transgressor's mistakes and undo his sins. Of criminals it is said that the detective agency is now so organized that no wrong-doer can escape. Though the absconder hide in the garret, though he make his bed in some mine, though he take a ship and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, he cannot escape the sleuth who follows him. And be it reverently said, no prodigal son can escape the sleuth-like love of God's pursuing providence. Go where you will, you cannot elude it. At last God's love will find you out, and bring you back from the husks into the Father's house. —Hillis.

"A Wall, O Lord, Around Us Build" (70).

It was a dreary November morning in the year 1630, the same year in which the brave and pious king of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, had landed on the German coast to help his brethren, the German Protestants, to defend themselves against the Roman Catholic legions, under their leader, the cruel and heartless Tilly.

On this November evening there sat an old mother in a farmhouse on the outskirts of a Saxon village. Her son, a young man of about twenty years, had just brought home a rumor that a detachment of the much-feared Spanish troops was approaching, and would probably pass through the village during the night. The young man besought his mother to take refuge in the mountains. But she answered, if God willed it so, they would be saved, and exhorted him to prayer.

She lighted a lamp, took her prayerbook, and began to sing "A Wall, O Lord, Around Us Build." At this the son revolted, telling his mother that by her foolish singing and by the light of her lamp she would certainly show the enemies the way to their home, and needlessly expose them. But she persevered, and continued to sing, "A Wall, O Lord, Around Us Build."

"How can the Lord build a wall around us?" angrily questioned the son. "The time of miracles is past."

"The Lord can, if he so will," she quietly answered, and continued to sing and pray through the whole night: "A Wall, O Lord, Around Us Build."

When the morning broke the son ventured to the door. When he tried to open it, he found it barricaded. A heavy snowdrift had ob-

structed it and buried the house, thus concealing it from the enemies, who, during the night, had passed through the village, carrying plunder and murder into almost every home.—Christian Messenger.

Shielded From Danger (71).

While on a long journey across India, Dr. John Scudder, the first medical missionary from America, contracted jungle fever, and it was thought he could not live. When word reached Mrs. Scudder, she borrowed a tent, laid in a stock of provisions, hired the necessary bearers, and started to join him at once, taking her little son with her.

The way led through a dense jungle infested by wild beasts. But all went well until night came on, when the bearers became so terrified at the growling of the tigers that they suddenly fled.

With no human arm to protect her, the defenseless woman spent the long hours of that lonely night in prayer. Again and again she heard the tread of wild elephants and the low, menacing growls of tigers not far away. "All night long," says her brother, "they seemed to be circling around the spot where she knelt, ready to spring upon her and her child." But God held them back. In the morning the bearers returned, and the journey was resumed. At its close, Mrs. Scudder found the crisis past and her husband convalescent.—Belle Brain.

God Does Care (72).

About the beginning of this century an unbeliever was reported to have said that the mission of the twentieth century would be to discover God, and when God should be discovered, it would be found that he does not care. It would be a bitter sorrow for the world if this prophecy were to come true. The secret of hope in believing souls everywhere is that God does care. This is one great truth that God has been striving through all the generations to have men believe.—J. R. Miller.

VIII. LIFE'S SUPREME CHOICE.

"Choose you this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24:15.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. W. H. Clough said: The man I honor is the man who can rise in a company of men and women disloyal to all that Christ has taught, and make his protest for his Master. Do you remember how Thackeray has shown us the most chivalrous and the most Christian man in all his gallery of brave and noble spirits attaining that high honor? When Colonel Newcome heard the gross song sung by the popular wit of the company, and received with rounds of applause, he rose, stirred to a deep moral anger, and flushed with shame, "Does any man say go on to such disgusting ribaldry as this? For my part I am not sorry that my son should see, for once in his life, to what shame and degradation and dishonor drunkenness may bring a man." In that great day, when Christ comes again, of such deeds and of such men he shall speak in praise. "Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven."

Can we follow these confessors of the Lord? Do we always acknowledge our allegiance to Christ? Do not some of us stand in workshops where jests are passed and allusions are made which dishonor Christ, and we make no protest? Do not some of us sit at men's tables and hear talk which is not only scornful to Christian verities, but corrupting to Christian purity, and we make no sign? You say that you felt the hot blush when all that Christ lived for and died for was slighted and mocked at. My brother, Christ asks more than a blush. There is a time when it is a shame not to speak. However difficult it may be to know when and how to make our confession, and what to say and to do, and however unwilling you are to appear ostentatious or pharisaic, there are occasions in life when we must confess our allegiance, or stand under the condemnation of having been ashamed of Christ.

* * *

Rev. J. P. Landis, D. D., said: To confess Christ before men is to make a public acknowledgment of him as the Saviour of the race, but especially to express one's acceptance of him as his personal Saviour, to espouse actively his cause, to ally one's self with the disciples of Christ. He that announces his trust in Jesus for forgiveness, who is truly baptized into the name of Christ, and partakes of the Lord's Supper, who unites with the Church and labors for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, in all these ways confesses Christ. So also a life of obedience, humility, piety, godly zeal, which is Christ-like, is a witness for Christ and a testimony to his transforming power. Such an one will Christ not only formally acknowledge before the Father, but give him a glorious share in his heavenly honor.

To deny Christ is to do the opposite of the above. To do this it is not necessary publicly and formally to declare one's renunciation of Christ as an infidel might do, but simply neglect to confess him in the

ways above indicated. If we in any such way disown Christ, we are none of his, and it cannot but be that he must disown us. Let us, then, accept and confess Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Choosing a Career.

It was said of the consecrated Bishop Thoburn that "He chose Christ for a career."

Truth in Repose (73). Emerson said that "God offers every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please—you can never have both."

God or the Devil (74).

G. Campbell Morgan says: My father came into my house soon after I was married, and looked around into every room, and then he said to me: "Yes, it is very nice, but nobody will know, walking through here, whether you belong to God or the devil." I went through and looked at the rooms again, and I thought: "He is quite right." So we made up our minds straightway that there should be no room in our house, henceforth, that had not some message, by picture or wall text, for every corner should tell that we serve the King.

A Whole-Hearted Choice (75).

To say to Jesus, "Thou art as one of the great religious teachers," does not satisfy him. He calls only those blessed who say, "Thou art the Saviour, the divine Son of the true and living God, my Saviour and my Lord." In the town of Bansley, England, there was a great revival. A talented man, a lecturer on atheism, when approached by a Christian friend, said contemptuously, "Christ is not worth a thought." But the next evening he went to Henry Thorne, the evangelist, and said, "I have received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour." The following Sunday evening, in the presence of a large audience, he testified, "Last week I did not believe there was a God, but now I know the Lord Jesus Christ has pardoned all my sins."—Selected.

The Great Decision (76).

It was a day in spring, a Saturday, and the millhands in the New England village stopped work at noon. Forth from the stocking mill where he labored came Charley Jordan, happy to be out in the spring air with a half-holiday at his disposal. Half-way down the street he met his Sunday School teacher, who stopped him for a moment, spoke pleasantly of the fine spring weather, asked him a question about his work, inquired if he would be in Sunday School next day, and passed on. Then wavering a moment in her own mind, she turned with a sudden impulse and faced him again.

"Charley," she asked, "don't you think it is time for you to take a stand for the best things—I mean, you know, the things of the Christian life?"

He had heard sermons all his life, and was not moved by them, but this simple, direct word of his teacher touched a sudden chord in his heart. He was fifteen, more than two-thirds of twenty-one.

He thought a moment and then said:

"Yes, Mrs. Beale, I think it is time. I will do it."

He went to his home as he had often gone before, and yet not the same. He had made a great decision, and had something to live up to. He had always been a clean boy and a thoughtful boy. He had few bad habits to unlearn or serious faults to forsake. What had he promised to do, and how was he to go about it, and what did it all amount to, anyway?

As to his outer conduct, it was not greatly different from before. But more resolutely he sought association with the better things about him. New and large aspirations took possession of him, and found new impulse from within. He drew better books from the library and sought the fellowship of the best young people.

He is still a young man, relatively speaking; but he has reached a position of influence and usefulness second to that of no man in the city where he now resides. Very recently, to a close friend, he told the story of his early struggles, and came back again and again to the moment when, a care-free boy, whistling his way home from the factory, he paused to meet the simple question of his Sunday School teacher, a question she had asked with fluttering heart, and almost forbore to ask at all.

"It was the very opportune moment," said he, "and although I was in no serious danger of going to the bad, it kindled within me a new aspiration, born of a new ideal."—Youth's Companion.

The Reaction of Choice in Character (77).

Christians themselves need the strength which open confession brings. It braces one to let men know that he has identified himself with a noble cause. The consciousness that men have their eyes upon us is one of the ways God has of holding his servants true to their appointed task. Let a man commit himself in public to an arduous enterprise, and the gaze of the witnesses will help keep him from turning back. When men enlisted for the Civil War they always did it in public. The act of putting on the uniform and marching openly under the flag quenched the fears of the heart, and made timid men brave as lions. No man is strong enough to dispense with the strength which comes from public confession.—Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.

"On the Lord's Side" (78).

It is a glorious thing to be "on the Lord's side." Moses was on it. The finest spirits of history have been ranged thereon. Are we? Everyone would be "on the Lord's side" did they know how right and good that side is. Those who are "on the Lord's side" are on the side of all that is pure and spiritual and kind and beneficent. "The Lord's side" is a phrase which, like many Old Testament expressions, has acquired a deepened significance in these days of the Christian faith. "The Lord's side" now means Christ's side, the side of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

They who are "on the Lord's side" are pardoned. Many of them know this, and all may know it. "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," says the Christian, and he has good reason to believe in it. He has the

inward peace and the far-shining hope which are the seal and assurance of it.

When we are "on the Lord's side," our whole nature is renewed. Verily, we are "born again." All the old things have become new. We love the good and hate the evil. We watch and we pray that we may please God. Cheerful holiness becomes the passion of our lives. Not that we are without temptations. By no means. We have "manifold temptations." And the more our zeal for Christ increases the more insidious and fearful are our temptations. But even these dark experiences have their strong encouragement. They are sure signs that we are "on the Lord's side." Satan would not lure us were he not persuaded that it is to that side we belong. And with all the temptations our sympathizing Lord gives us a way of escape.

They who are "on the Lord's side" are called to declare themselves. Mr. Facing-both-ways is not of the soldiery of Jehovah. In most matters we are required to take sides. This is so in literature, in politics, in conversation. Necessarily, it is also so in religion. Moses sternly demanded that those who were "on the Lord's side" should avow it in that critical season. And the demand of Moses is the eternal demand: "Who is on the Lord's side?" This is a challenge we all must soon or late respond to. Why not let it be soon rather than late?—The Young Man.

The Pretexts of Indecision (79).

When duly examined the pretexts of indecision are absurd; unless we submit to the great appeal, nothing is left but speechlessness. What are the undecided ones waiting for? Some are stopped by a variety of presuppositions. Much mystery and many questions must be cleared up. There are difficulties with regard to the Bible: the great question of Noah's ark, of Balaam's ass, of the Gadarene swine. How shall we reconcile sin, suffering, and death, with the goodness of God? Are not the birth and death of Christ wrapped in mystery? Now, it is true that revelation presents great problems; but does this justify our hesitation? Spots appear on the sun, yet it gives more light than any other luminary, therefore we rejoice to walk in its light; and although dark places occur in revelation, it is still "the master-light of all our seeing," and our common sense bids us follow its guidance. We have to judge between Christ and other masters, and there need not be one moment's hesitation between the glorious liberty, the godly comfort, the high character, the sweet service, the benign influence, the splendid hope of the Christian life and the life of sin.

Many wait for a more powerful impulse. Waiting for something practically supernatural that will agitate, stimulate, or master them; but really the appeal of conscience is not less the voice of God than the vision that smote Saul.

Others wait for a convenient season. "Convenient" is a word that has no place in serious life. When seriously ill, we do not defer sending for the doctor until it is convenient. How much rather, then, shall we promptly deal with the crisis of the soul!—W. L. Watkinson, D.D.

IX. UNDER THE SCRUTINY OF OMNISCIENCE.

"But the Lord looked on the Heart." 1 Samuel 16:7.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. James I. Good makes the following comment: How searching are the eyes of God, "discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart!" His vision is both telescopic and microscopic, seeing us afar off and magnifying our actions in their true light. Where art thou? he asks us as he did Adam. What doest thou here? he asks as he did Elijah. We are to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith or not. Am I a Laodicean, and lukewarm? Have I just enough religion to lull my conscience into a false security? Lukewarm; he wants me to be either cold or hot (boiling, fervent) rather than lukewarm; yes, even cold (ice cold), than lukewarm. Does our text mean he would rather have me no Christian than a lukewarm professor? No, it does not question the state as much as the tendency of my heart. Lukewarmness, if I am going from cold to hot, is desirable; but if I am passing from hot to cold, it is worse than coldness. What says the thermometer; which way points the barometer of my heart? Am I inclining to evil or good—growing in grace or in evil? Lord, help me to return to thee!

* * *

The late J. Pierpont Morgan's testimony before the Pujo Committee at Washington is an apt commentary on the spirit of this verse; Mr. Morgan's words in answer to the examiner's questions are indented:

I know lots of men, business men, too, who can borrow any amount, whose credit is unquestioned.

Is that not because it is believed that they have the money back of them?

No, sir; it is because people believe in the man.

And it is regardless of whether he has any financial backing at all, is it?

It is very often.

And he might not be worth anything?

He might not have anything. I have known a man to come into my office and I have given him a check for a million dollars when I knew he had not a cent in the world.

There are not many of them?

Yes, a good many.

Commercial credits are based upon the possession of money or property?

Money or property or character.

Is not commercial credit based primarily upon money or property?

No, sir; the first thing is character.

Before money or property?

Before money or anything else. Money cannot buy it.

So that a man with character, without anything at all behind it, can get all the credit he wants, and a man with the property cannot get it?

That is very often the case.

But is that the rule of business?

That is the rule of business, sir.

If that is the rule of business, Mr. Morgan, why do the banks demand —the first thing they ask—a statement of what the man has before they extend him credit?

That is a question which—that is what they go into; but the first thing they say is, I want to see your record.

Yes; and if his record is a blank the next thing is how much he has got?

People do not care then.

For instance, if he has got government bonds, or railroad bonds, and goes in to get credit, he gets it, and on the security of those bonds, does he not?

Yes.

He does not get it on his face or his character, does he?

Yes, he gets it on his character.

I see; then he might as well take the bonds home, had he not?

A man I do not trust could not get money from me on all the bonds in Christendom.

That is the rule all over the world?

I think that is the fundamental basis of business.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

God's Photograph Gallery (80).

The whole world is God's photograph gallery. Memory is a long series of photographs of an evil man's sins. Each incident is told in chapters. The life makes up the tables of memory that are also the Book of God. That is what the wise man meant when he said, "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Seemingly, however, this publicity is really a form of mercy. The knowledge that all good, as well as all evil, is journeying towards the revealing day braces men for their task. Not all things are known today, but all will be known tomorrow. Come soon or come late, the best and the worst reveals itself. The fly stings the rose and apple, but if the wound is secret today, tomorrow the beginnings of decay will appear. Not otherwise, evil is a worm working silently in the soul. The youth may believe that the pictures he paints on the chambers of imagination will never be known to any eye save his own; but God buried Pompeii for two thousand years, and then the excavator revealed the rooms in the house, and lo! the walls covered with suggestive scenes are set out to receive the contempt of all mankind. Man's imagination is a gallery whose walls of imagery change daily. Dreams are artists. Slowly the scenes grow. The faces may be the faces of angels, or they may be the faces of demons.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

Discerning Hidden Flaws (81).

The dynamometer-car has been a potent influence of late years in making railroads safe—not in itself, but in the curious record which it makes automatically of the general condition of the road. Most of the larger railroads maintain a dynamometer-car. The recording apparatus within the car looks very like a small cylinder press, except that from the central mechanism cams, cog-wheels, chain-belts, and indicators of various kinds reach down through the floor of the car and connect with the axles, the wheels, and even the rails themselves. When the car moves, these attachments telegraph the condition of the roadbed up through the floor of the car to a printing cylinder, where glass fountain-pens write an exact account of it all on long rolls of paper. In case there is any discrepancy in the roadbed, the apparatus not only records it on paper, but also drops a large spot of yellow or black paint on the ties at the faulty spot, so that it may be easily found and repaired. The roadbed might seem in perfect condition to the glance of a passer-by, but the recording apparatus finds and records its defects. Our lives may appear all right to those about us, but God knows our every act and even the secret thought of our hearts.—S. S. Times.

Sin's Omniscient Antagonist (82).

The very constitution of the universe, the laws of Nature are against the wrongdoer; the very constitution of the universe, the laws of Nature are on the side of the man who does right. Sisera was to these early Israelites the personification of oppression and tyranny. Jabin the king scarcely counted; Sisera—this man with the nine hundred chariots—was the real oppressor. For twenty years he had planted his heel upon the neck of Israel; for twenty years he had enslaved them and tyrannized over them. Sisera to the Israelites was the personification and representative of the power of evil. And the "stars in their courses" stand for Nature's powers, the laws of the universe, the constitution of things. And Deborah sang, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."—J. D. Jones.

The Immutable Right (83).

In my boyhood, the first reading lesson in my spelling book was, "No man can put off the law of God," words which ought to be inscribed in golden letters on our halls of legislature, and engraven indelibly on the heart of every magistrate, lawmaker, and citizen. In national affairs, there is intrinsic right, which law cannot neutralize; intrinsic wrong, whose character no law can modify, whose penalty no law can avert. In every act, God has his part. He works through men, when they will be his agent; upon them, in fearful recompense, when they essay to act independently of him. The march of retribution is sure as the ordinances of the heavens.—Andrew P. Peabody.

Sin's Sure Exposure (84).

"Take these beans," said father, handing me a bucket containing about a half-gallon, "and go drop them, one in a hill, where Charles is planting corn, above the mill. You may go fishing when you are through." Just the thing I wanted—to go fishing.

I started off one bean in a hill, but the amount in my bucket seemed to go down so slow. I did not want to be dishonest, but I began to drop two or three every few hills, thinking that would be considered accidental. Somehow I kept increasing the number, until I dropped small handfuls.

The beans soon gave out, and off to the river I went. The fish bit all right, and so did the gnats. The latter spoiled the pleasure of fishing, so to the house I went long before night.

I think father knew what I had done, but he said nothing.

I dreaded the time when the beans would come up. I hoped to be able secretly to destroy them. But to destroy them without detection was impossible.

At last the dreaded day came. Father asked me to walk with him over to the field above the mill and see how the corn and beans were looking. As we walked through the field father would say every few steps: "Your beans have come up well." At length he stopped and stood still where the beans were the thickest. Nothing was said for some moment. I could stand it no longer, and burst into tears. Father stopped up, put his arm around me, and we knelt together and father prayed.—R. S. Satterfield.

The Records of What God Sees (85).

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened"—God's books. Down in the Southland the colored people have a song which runs like this:

"He sees all we do,
He hears all we say,
My God's a-writin all the time."

But you are writing, too. In the British Museum there is a piece of stone, about half the size of my Bible, which is probably five thousand years old, and in the middle of the stone there is the mark of a bird's foot. Five thousand years ago, when the stone was soft, the bird put its foot upon the stone, and the mark has been there ever since. My God is writing all the time, and so are you.—Chapman.

No Escaping the Records (86).

Sometimes God is very swift in penalty; at other times, inexorably slow. There are sins which instantly condemn a man and make him a social outcast in a day. They cannot be hidden, and, being cried abroad, they shatter the character and blight the home. But if there be sins that go before to judgment, I think there are far more that follow after, and such sins may track a man for years before at the long last they track him down. I have never heard that this word has been cancelled, "Be sure your sin will find you out." You think that because five years are gone, or ten, it's all right; your sin is dead and buried. But with God a thousand years are as a day. He tarries, but he has not forgotten.—G. H. Morrison.

Our Real Selves (87).

It is an old saying that a man is himself in his pleasures. He may follow a business which is unpleasant: he may deceive others in manners

and morals, but in his pleasures he is himself. When he is free to do what he likes, we find out exactly what kind of a man he is. When the apostles were released from prison, we are told that "they returned to their own company." Each of us has his company, to which he belongs, which he prefers. We may be for a time prevented from joining that company. But when all restraint is removed, when necessary work, or limitations of time, or public opinion are removed, we, too, go to our own place. There is a moral as well as a material gravitation, which in its operation reveals our real preferences and decides our destiny.—Selected.

Character Is What God Sees in You (88).

"Character is what a man is in the dark—what he is without an audience," says Robert J. Burdette in The Pacific Baptist. "His reputation may be a grandstand play, a safe, senseless slide to second with the ball a quarter of a mile away, a cloud of dust and thunders of cheers. His character may be the sacrifice hit that brings him hisses and advances the team."

What you wish you were—that is your ideal. What people say you are—that is your reputation. What you know you are—that is your character. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln: You may fool some other people all of the time, you may fool all other people some of the time, but you cannot fool yourself one little bit of the time.

You will not drink wine, not even for politeness' sake at the dinner table of an esteemed friend, and "our best society" says you are a fanatical, bigoted prohibitionist. You will not encourage a vile story with a smile. They say you are a cold-blooded hypocrite. You will not allow yourself to laugh at a funny story well told, in which all the laugh is in its profanity. Folks say you are self-righteous. And you carry your Bible openly in your hand when you go to church. "A canting Pharisee," they say. Yet all the while your character is that of a sober, pure-minded, reverent, God-fearing man—a Christian. Four reputations and one character which outweighs and outlasts them all going into eternity with you.

Character! You won't find the word in your Bible. But there you learn what it is. The Bible is not a dictionary; it is a teacher. The primary meaning of the word character is an instrument for marking or graving. Commonly, a mark engraved upon a plate of stone or metal; a figure or sign cut deep into a plate of bronze by a chisel of steel. Now do you begin to understand what your character is?

Something which your daily life cuts deep and deeper into your soul day by day and marks you. "To him that overcometh I will give a white stone, and in the stone (not on it, you observe) a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it." Is not that wondrously glorious? That new name, written by the finger of God deep in the white pebble—that is your character. That is your real name. Not Simon that men called you by, but Peter by God's rechristening; what God knows you are and what you know you are. Do you begin to understand?

Even the angels may never fully comprehend your true character. John quotes Christ as saying that it is a secret between yourself and

God. Maybe God himself does not know your new name yet. He is learning it from your daily life. Are you setting him a fair copy for that new name? You pray God every day to watch over you and keep you from evil. Do you pray that he will watch you to see what you are doing, hear what you are saying, look down into your soul to note what you are thinking? By those things you are making character. God does not make it. You do.

Character is not builded up like a house that may be torn down if it be found defective. It is being engraved day by day deep, deep into your soul, the immortal part of you. You cannot rub it out. It stands. And you cannot write it in the ragged years of the fag end of a misspent life. Christ can forgive the sins of a thief on his deathbed, but he cannot give him the character of an honest man.

"As a man thinketh, so is he." What do you think about when you are alone? What are you in the dark? What is your real name?

Decay at the Heart (89).

Toward the end of summer a single tree in the forest will begin to change color ahead of all others, thus exciting the enthusiastic admiration of thoughtless observers. The tree is sickly and dying. It is shortening its period of usefulness, and soon will bloom no more. It may be glorious in death, but its passing is premature. Examination will be likely to show it infested with noxious insects. Decay has already set in. "Many among you are sickly, and some sleep."—Selected.

X. FAITH'S VISION OF OUR HEAVENLY ALLIES.

"And he answered, Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. . . . And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold . . . horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."—2 Kings 6:16, 17.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Strength Through Visions.

Bishop Phillips Brooks wrote::

We say that "seeing God" is the source and secret of all true courage. What do we really mean by seeing God? As soon as we own that the sight of the bodily eyes is impossible, we own that there is a figurative element in the expression. Let us see what it is. To see God, then, I think, may be separated into these three elements.

I. First, it is to recognize his character as the ruling law of the universe. The qualities of God we know. They are involved in our very conception of him. He is righteous, just, loving, true, pure. Now, when your eyes are opened, you see these divine principles running everywhere.

II. Secondly, to see God is to see God's purposes in everything. The two are one in essence, but different in apprehension. But when the world opens to you as a plan of God, so that he who reads human progress, in its largeness or its littleness, reads God's will; that, again, is seeing God.

III. And still more to see God is to be conscious of our own spiritual relations to him, to know as a comfort and a motive that he lves us, to be surrounded with his companionship, to find that what we do depends not merely upon what he is but upon his being present with us; in a word, to love our Father with an active love—that is a life for which the devout soul finds no adequate description but that it is "seeing God."

This then, is what we mean by "seeing God." It is to have the whole world as we think of it, as we live in it, full of his character, his purposes, and his love.

* * *

Rev. F. B. Meyer says: How much of our Christian work has been abortive because we have persisted in initiating it for ourselves, instead of ascertaining what God was doing and where he required our presence! We dream bright dreams of success. We try to command it. We call to our aid all kinds of expedients. questionable or otherwise. At last we turn back, disheartened and ashamed, like children who are torn and scratched by the brambles, and soiled by the quagmire. None of this had come about if only we had been, from the first, under God's unerring guidance. He might test us, but he could not allow us to mistake.

Naturally, the child of God, longing to know his Father's will, turns to the sacred Book, and refreshes his confidence by noticing how in all ages God has guided those who dared to trust him up to the very hilt.

but who at the time must have been as perplexed as we are often now. We know how Abraham left kindred and country, and started, with no other guide than God, across the trackless desert to a land which he knew not. We know how for forty years the Israelites were led through the peninsula of Sinai, with its labyrinths of red sandstone and its wastes of sand. We know how Joshua, in entering the Land of Promise, was able to cope with the difficulties of an unknown region, and to overcome great and warlike nations, because he looked to the Captain of the Lord's hosts, who ever leads to victory.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

God is With Us in Life's Battlefields (90).

During the Franco-Prussian War, at the siege of Paris, the French went out under cover of night to gather up their wounded. Moving about among the injured, they called in low tones, so as not to betray their presence to the enemy: "If there are any wounded here, we are your friends, come to help you. If you are injured, let it be quietly known, and we will take you to safety and comfort." And, my friends, there is another who moves quietly about from place to place over the battlefield of life—his heart is full of tears and his healing touch is full of health, calling out of the deep night to injured souls: "I have come for you. O, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Some one said to Horace Bushnell: "Doctor, when you go to heaven, I think some angel will say, 'There comes a man the Master knows.'" "Well," answered Bushnell, with great delicacy, "I hope I may not be entirely unknown to the Master when I get home." Ah, yes, the one who said, "In my Father's house are many mansions," also said: "I know mine own and mine own know me."—Rev. Frederick L. Shannon.

Safe Amid Dangers (91).

A little yacht was cruising among the western isles of Scotland, and one sullen evening a gale set in from the broad Atlantic. It came moaning over the long, rolling swell, and caught the frail craft off a perilous leeshore. There was no shelter at hand, but the old skipper had known that treacherous coast from boyhood, and he said that there was a harbor some distance away, and he thought he could make it. And so, through the darkness, the little ship went plunging on her course, amid the wild welter of wind and wave. At length she swung into smooth water, and they let go the anchor, and, turning into their berths, went peacefully to sleep. In the morning the passenger came on deck, and surveyed the scene—a little loch, girt about by dark, purple mountains. It was a quiet haven; but, looking toward the entrance, he beheld a narrow channel, with sharp rocks jutting here and there, and all awash with boiling surf. To think of passing that way! The least swerving of the tiller, and those jagged teeth would catch the frail timbers and grind them to splinters, and every life would perish. He shuddered, and, turning to the old skipper, he exclaimed: "Did we—did we pass there in the darkness?"

And this is a parable of life. We know something of the goodness and mercy which have followed us all our days, but there is more, immeasurably more, than we have ever noticed: and we shall never realize

what a debt we owe to the unseen love which has attended us until we get home to the city of God, and from its shining battlements survey the long road which we have traveled over the wide wilderness. We shall then perceive, in the clear light of eternity, what perils we have escaped —the hidden snares, the lurking foes, the rushing torrents, the dizzy precipices which we have passed securely in the darkness, because an unseen hand was holding us and guiding our blind steps. Then we shall realize what we owe to the love of God.—Herald and Presbyter.

Seeing God in His Providences (92).

The Sidonians agreed amongst themselves to choose him to be their king who that morning should first see the sun. Whilst all others were gazing on the east, one alone looked on the west. But he first of all discovered the light of the sun shining on the tops of houses. God is seen sooner, easier, clearer in his operations than in his essence. Best beheld by reflection in his creatures. "For the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."—Thomas Fuller.

The Conqueror of Conquerors (93).

Before Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia he told the Russian ambassador that he would destroy that empire. The ambassador's reply was, "Man proposes, but God disposes." "Tell your master," thundered the arrogant and self-confident Corsican, "that I am he that proposes and I am he that disposes." It was a challenge to the living God to show who is the ruler of this world; and God accepted the challenge. He moved not from his august throne, but he sent one of his most humble messengers, the crystal snowflake from heaven, to punish the audacious boaster! Napoleon flung his forces into Moscow, but in his retreat he left on the frozen plains the bulk of his vast army; and the official returns of the Russian authorities reported 23.516 French corpses buried, and 95,816 dead horses. When in 1815, Napoleon, escaping from Elba, again threatened to dispose events in European history at his will, the sovereign of the world, whose hand is on the helm of history, ordained that Blucher should join the Iron Duke at the turning point of the conflict of Waterloo, and that the decisive battle should turn the fate of Europe. That was the crowning victory that ushered in thirty years of peace. Napoleon found, at St. Helena, that God does dispose.—Arthur T. Pierson.

Divine Interposition (94).

One summer morning a twelve car train on a railway in Eastern Missouri containing the members of a Sunday School was bound for a picnic at a point about fifty miles distant. The train had not proceeded more than half way when a thunder-storm broke. The rain fell in torrents. The engineer was worried for fear the terrific downfall might cause a washout or a spreading of the rails, and he slowed down to about thirty-five miles an hour. As the train swung around a curve and approached a small station which it was to pass without stopping, the engineer, peering through the broken curtain of rain, saw that the switch just ahead was open. It meant a terrible disaster. He closed the throttle and put on the brakes in an instant. "Better stick to it," he

shouted to his fireman, "hundreds of children on board." "I mean to," was the answer. "God help us all." His last words were drowned by a terrific crash of thunder which came with a flash of lightning that seemed to strike the ground just ahead of the engine. The next thing they knew they were past the station, still riding safely on the main line rails. The train came to a stop, and the engineer and conductor hurried back to discover what had happened and how the train had passed the open switch. They found that the lightning had struck squarely between the switch and the rail, and had closed the switch. "It was the act of God," said the engineer.—Christian Herald.

How the Foe Was Routed (95).

Herodotus relates that the priests of Egypt told him how Sennacherib, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched a large army into Egypt. The Egyptian army refused to help their king, Sethon, a priest of Vulcan. He, being reduced to a strait, entered the temple and lamented before the god the calamities impending. While thus engaged he fell asleep, and the god appeared to him in a vision, telling him that he would stand by him, and would send him help. Trusting this vision, the priest-king took with him such men as would follow him and went to Pelusium, at the entrance of Egypt. But when they arrived there myriads of field mice pouring in on their enemies, devoured their quivers and bows and the handles of their shields, so that when they fled, next day, defenceless, many of them were killed. And to this day, he adds, a stone statue of this king stands in the temple of Vulcan, with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription: "Whoever looks on me, let him revere the gods."

The mouse was the symbol of wasting and destruction, and was, perhaps, intended only to embody the idea of secret and irresistible ruin.—Geikie.

God's People Safe (96).

First of all, we may well apply our text to our civic and national life. It should teach us that our strength is not in numbers, nor in wealth, nor in naval or military power, but in the quality of our people; in fact that we are such a people as God can defend, and in the midst of whom he may be the inspiration and the glory. Greece and Rome and all the old nations that once were glorious and have passed into decay were most populous and most wealthy and most powerful when they were nearest their ruin. True greatness of a city or a State or a nation is not the kind that you can measure with a measuring line or with a census-taker's notebook. It does not depend upon quantity so much as upon quality. If God is like a wall of fire around a city or a nation, if he dwell in the midst of the people and is their true pride and glory, then that people is safe. But if we care more for money than we do for men; if we care more for business than we do for children; if we care more for material things than we do for pleasing God, then there is no power in military force or naval strength that can save the nation.—Banks.

XI. FOLLOWING THE GLEAM; OR MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL TO SERVICE.

"For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this."—Esther 4:14.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

There is a sense in which God may be said to be all the more strongly in evidence in this book of Esther just because his name is nowhere mentioned. He is everywhere assumed to be present and interposing, and his existence and control in human affairs are taken for granted. Divine providence is nowhere more clearly emphasized than by this humble Jew, Mordecai, who never for a moment questions the workings of God's power or the eventual triumph of his purposes. He has gotten so far beyond the point of trying to prove to anyone that there is a God that he does not even mention his name. The great lesson of the text is that God assigns each to special service and calls him to his life-work by special messages. He who fails to heed and respond misses life's supreme appointments.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis commented on this theme in these striking words: How often we hear a man say, "I am not in business for philanthropy, or altruism, or for my health." What is meant is that the deed is being done for the reward that it brings. "Verily, verily I say unto you, they have their reward," but the return is in the life that now is. But over against these who work for themselves early and late and all the time, stands the occasional disinterested life. Down in Lexington is an avenue of noble elms. About 1790 a soldier of the Revolution made his way over the Alleghenies. He was ambitious to be one of the builders of a new State, and he planned the University of Transylvania, and dreamed his dreams of a great city springing up in the wilderness. Thirty years passed swiftly by, and he had come to the days allotted to men, and the kindly physician told him that the end was near. In that hour the old hero determined to do one more disinterested deed. When the family were at their tasks, with the help of his black men he dressed, and made his way to the edge of the forest, and brought back two tall, straight young elms and planted them on either side of the path. In the afternoon he made his servants stretch a line and put out stakes running a quarter of a mile down to the roadway. The next morning the old man planted two more young elms, and so on until the two lines between the house and the roadway were complete. But by this time his son and his servant were carrying him out to see the last tree planted. One afternoon he asked his son to find the stump of a tree that held 100 rings, and had known as many summers and winters, and then he asked to be carried out to see that stump. Looking long upon a tree of similar size, he said, musingly, to his son: "One hundred years from now

your grandchildren will drive under trees as great as these. Then the boughs that I have planted will meet and arch, and the birds of the summer, going southward, will stop and rest upon these boughs, and old men and little children will stand under the shade. Perhaps the Sons of the Revolution may sometimes, in memory, encamp here." It was an autumn day. The night cry of the wild fowl leaving the north and winter, and seeking the summer land, fell through the pathless air. The old man whispered to his son: "It is time . . . I will go with the birds," and so he slipped away—a pilgrim who had lingered long after his soldiers in arms had gone home on the Great Furlough. The other day driving under that avenue of noble elms, and looking at the little white shaft that has stood for nearly 100 years above his dust, I understood why his grandchildren and his great grandchildren missed the man whose seat is empty. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, yea, saith the Spirit, they do rest from their labors, but their works do follow them."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Safety of the Obedient (98).

When Queen Elizabeth was sending an ambassador far away on important and difficult business, he asked: "But what will become of my own business and my family?" To which the queen replied: "You take care of my business, and I will take care of yours." If we are doing God's work, he will take care of our interests. He is pledged to do it.—The Classmate.

A Forfeited Talent (99).

There are fishes that have had to pay a terrible forfeit for having their abode in dark caverns. Nature has taken her revenge upon them—she has closed up their eyes . . . If any man take his talent and hide it in a napkin, although it is apparently doing him neither harm nor good. God will not allow him to have it. In the parable the man's crime was simply neglect—"thou wicked and slothful servant." It was a wasted life—a life which failed in the holy stewardship of itself. Such a life is a peril to all who cross its path. . . . It is significant to notice that it was the man who had only one talent who was guilty of neglecting it. . . . These who have abundant store sow with a lavish hand. Our temptation as ordinary men is not to sow at all. The interest on our talent would be so small that we excuse ourselves with the reflection that it is not worth while. It is those who belong to the rank and file of life who need this warning most.—Drummond.

Finding and Following the Path (100).

The only serious matter is to discover the prepared path. We may do this by abiding fellowship with the Spirit. Remember how when Paul essayed to turn aside from the prepared path of life, and to go first to the left to Ephesus, and then to the right unto Bithynia, in each case we read, the Spirit suffered him not. For the most part the trend of daily circumstances will indicate the prepared path; but whenever we come to a standstill, puzzled to know which path to take of three or four that converge at a given point, let us stand still and consider the matter, asking God to speak to us through our judgments and to bar every path

but the right. When once the decision is made, let us never look back. Let us never dare to suppose that God could fail them that trust him. or permit them to make a mistake. If difficulties arise, they do not prove us to be wrong, and probably they are less by his path than they would have been by any other. Go forward. The way has been prepared; the mountains are a way; the rivers have fords; the lions are chained; the very waves shall yield a path; the desert shall be a highway to the land that flows with milk and honey.—F. B. Meyer.

"The Lost Opportunity" (101).

Remember, three things come not back;
The arrow sent upon its track—
It will not swerve, it will not stay
Its speed, it flies to wound or slay;
The spoken word, so soon forgot
By thee, but it has perished not;
In other hearts 'tis living still,
And doing work for good or ill;
And the lost opportunity
That cometh back no more to thee—
In vain thou weepest, in vain dost yearn,
Those three will nevermore return.
—From the Arabic.

A Woman Challenged to a Great Service (102).

After Bishop Thoburn had been sent out to India and had surveyed the field, he was convinced that if the women of the country were to be reached it must be through a woman. One day while itinerating his tent was pitched in a mango orchard. He went out for a little walk in the shade of the trees. It so happened that a vulture had built her nest in the broken top of one of the trees, and in passing near the place he picked up a quill which had fallen from her wing. Taking his penknife he began to amuse himself by making a writer's pen, and having succeeded in this he lightly enough thought that he would go into his tent and see if he could write with the big pen. On trial the pen did its work very well. The first letter written with this strange pen was to his sister, and the incident was destined to become historic. This letter contained a brief account of the work among the villages, and described the difficult situation in which girls were placed. As the best possible way to meet the difficulty it was suggested that the most promising girls should be gathered into a well-equipped boarding school at some central point. The letter closed with the question written almost thoughtlessly, "How would you like to come and take charge of such a school if we decide to make the attempt?" By the first steamer which could bring a reply came the ready and swift response that she would come just as soon as the way was opened for her to do so. The offer of Miss Thoburn of herself led, as we all know, to the organization of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.—Thoburn and India.

Eager For Service (103).

The Earl of Shaftesbury, having spent a long life in the service of his fellow-men, in his old age compelled to forego his efforts, said, with tears and a trembling voice, "When I consider how old I am, and that I must soon die, I feel that I cannot bear to leave this world with all the misery in it."—The Adult Bible Class Monthly.

"Good—Go—Do" (104). "I know two lovely words you can get out of the word 'good,'" said a little girl who was playing with her blocks. "They are 'go' and 'do.'" And the little girl had unconsciously preached a sermon. It surely is "good" to "go" and "do."—The Classmate.

Humble Investments; Great Results (105).

A little girl in a Sunday school in Nantasket led a dying man to Christ. She was only about six years of age at the time. Her uncle had been brought home very sick, and she heard the doctor telling the family that he could not live. When no one else was in the sick room, she crept softly in and put one hand on his cheek and put her little face up close to his and whispered, "Cast your sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God." The sick man, who had been in great distress both of mind and body, burst into tears. All night he prayed for God's help and forgiveness, and when the morning came his heart was at peace. Once more the little God-sent messenger watched her chance to speak her word alone to him. "Did you do as I told you, Uncle William?" she whispered lovingly. "Yes, I did, I did!" he answered. "He washed away my sins." A little later he died, but died praying that God would bless his "little angel," as he called her, for teaching him the way to Jesus.

* * * *

According to the story of the siege of Pekin, as told by Rev. Dr. Frank Gamewell, the clergyman who had charge of the work of fortifications of the British Embassy when it was besieged by the Boxers, it was a boy—and a poor, sick, consumptive boy at that—who saved the legation. The siege lasted fifty-six days, and during the first ten days one hundred and ten persons in the legation were killed and wounded. The brave prisoners held out, living on wheat and on mules and horses within the walls which they killed for meat. This state of things could not last long, but none of the messengers sent to Tientsin ever returned, for none ever reached that city. At last a consumptive boy volunteered to go and get relief somehow. They told him he would never get there; he would either die or be killed long before he could travel the eighty miles of the journey. He persisted, however, saying that he would probably have to die soon anyway. It is good to know that he successfully accomplished his errand, covering the one hundred and sixty miles to Tientsin and back in a month, and bringing relief to the almost exhausted inmates of the legation in a very few days after his return.—Pilgrim Teacher.

Our Unreturning Opportunities (106).

One was rummaging along the seashore gathering treasures of stone and shell. High on the beach lay a shell more beautiful than any yet

discovered. He was searching in a dreamy, listless way, looking here and there. "That shell is safe enough," he said. "I can pick that up at my leisure." But, as he waited, a higher wave swept up along the beach, recaptured the shell, and bore it back to the bosom of the ocean. How like the experiences of our lives is this! When the wave of another year has flowed back and off the shore of time, how many shells of plans, of opportunities, of purposes toward noble and better life, lying there, you thought within your easy grasp a year ago, has it not swept into the irreparable past!—Wayland Hoyt, D. D.

The Obligations of Our Position (107).

Every dispensation of providence is a kind of miracle wrought for our benefit. We must make the very most of it. It may be the position in life which is given to us. Every position, great or small, may be made almost as great or as little as we desire to make it, according as we make the most of it or the least of it. To do the necessary duties of any station, that is easy enough; but to gather up all the outlying opportunities, to be ready to lend a helping hand here, to give a kind hand there, and a helping counsel there; to fill, as we say, our place in life, instead of leaving it half empty; to be entirely in our work for the time being, this is what makes all the difference between a great man and a commonplace man; a useful man and a useless man; a good servant and an indifferent servant; a statesman, or a teacher, or ruler who will be long remembered, or one who will be forgotten as soon as he is dead.—Dean Stanley.

Life's Eventful Moment (108).

Watch carefully for the eventful moment, the eventful opportunity, the eventful occasion. There is such a thing as the psychological moment. It is true that

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood,
Leads on to fortune."

Just one hour was the opportunity to gain a life-long friend. Just for one moment did we grasp a fortune in our hand. Just that moment was it ours to save a soul. The Persians have put it this way:

"A thousand years did a poor man wait
Outside of heaven's gate;
Then, while a moment brief he dozed,
It opened, and—closed."

XII. FAITH'S SUPERIORITY TO CIRCUMSTANCE.

Shall We Receive Good at the Hands of God and Shall We Not Receive Evil? Job 2:10.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. C. C. Albertson, in preaching on this theme, said: The disagreeable is a portion of the necessity laid upon us by the constitution of society and the economy of life. The labor of life is largely drudgery. The mother, the nurse, the teacher, the breadwinner—these are all drudges. Think of the days and nights of pain and vigil in the life of every parent. Think of the patience tested to the limit in the experience of every teacher. Think of the daily practice of the musician. Think of the hard years of apprenticeship, the continuous application, never to be remitted, on the part of the mechanic. It is by such things the world lives and moves onward towards perfection. Do we grow weary of the same daily round? We would grow equally weary of constant variety. Has it never occurred to us that variety itself grows monotonous in time? I heard a lad, old beyond his years, complaining, "Everything is just the same day after day; the same food, the same studies, the same wail paper. I wish I could go away a while." Poor boy! Why did he not look up at night? There are always shifting panoramas in the sky; always glittering pageants of the stars. There was a man who wrote a book on his vacation experiences, an admirable book of its kind, and he spent his vacation in his own back yard! He sought to get into the meaning of common things, soil and rocks, and weeds and flowers, and rain and earth worms, and butterflies and birds. He found variety in monotony. There is an old hymn which sings:

> The common round, the daily task,
> Will furnish all we ought to ask,
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To lead us daily nearer God.

Much depends upon for whose sake we suffer the disagreeable. Many a woman cooks for her own family cheerfully who would not as cheerfully enter the domestic service of another household. Many a mother acts as nurse to her own children in sickness, dangerous and repulsive, who could not be induced to perform the same service for strangers. It makes all the difference in the world for whose sake we serve and suffer. Convince us that our Master calls us to lowly service and we will do it with exceeding joy. This consideration should be sufficient to lead us to accept the evils of life. They are means of discipline and they are a part of the King's business.

* * *

It seems to be God's way, and we may humbly and firmly believe a kind and good way, to give his creatures heavy burdens to bear; to

make all, so to speak, carry weight in the race of life; and work and fight at a certain disadvantage.—Boyd.

* * *

Three things are true of the experience which is called "chastening;" 1, it does not come by chance, but by design; 2, it is not pleasant at the time of its visitation; 3, in no case where it is endured with faith unshaken does it fail of its gracious compensation. There are true hearts passing through this experience without knowing it. They will have a glad awakening some good day.—Bishop O. P. Fitzgerald.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Discipline of Hardship (109).

In April the peach orchard lends a faint pink flush to the distant hillside, and that stands for the moralities. In September the ripe fruit lends a golden blush of clustered food to the same hill. And such is the fruit of religion. Great is the importance of the root moralities, but roots and boughs imply the ripened fruit.

The rule of life is health, prosperity, and sunshine. But God hath appointed wrestling, defeat, and suffering as important members of his corps of teachers.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

Hard Times Good Times (110).

A beekeeper told me the story of the hive—how, when the little bee is in the first stage, it is put into a hexagonal cell, and honey enough is stored there for its use till it reaches maturity. The honey is sealed with a capsule of wax, and when the tiny bee has fed itself on the honey and exhausted the supply, the time has come for it to emerge into the open. But, oh, the wrestle, the tussle, the straining to get through that wax! It is the strait gate for the bee, so strait that in the agony of exit the bee rubs off the membrane that hid its wings, and on the other side it is able to fly! Once a moth got into the hive and fed on the wax capsules, and the bees got out without any strain or struggle. But they could not fly, and the other bees stung them to death. Are you congratulating yourself on having an easy time? No hardness, no difficulties, no cross? Beware lest, like the bees, you lose your wing-power and perish miserably in the dust.—F. B. Meyer.

The True Interpretation of Trouble (111).

In our experience much that perplexes us is often but the answer to our prayer. Sometimes we pray for patience and God sends us tribulation and we forget that he has said, "Tribulation worketh patience." Sometimes we pray for submission and God sends us suffering, and we forget that our Saviour, though he were a Son, yet "learned obedience by the things which he suffered." We must be careful to try to interpret our experiences as God's answers to our prayers. When Mr. Gladstone was once asked what is the remedy for the deeper sorrows of the human heart, what a man should chiefly look to as the power that will enable him manfully to confront his afflictions, his answer was: "I must point to something which, in a well-known hymn, is called 'The old, old story,' told of in an old, old book, and taught

with an old, old teaching which is the greatest and best gift ever given to mankind."—Selected.

Struggle's Mission (112).

You are a block of rough marble. You may sometime come to be a statue of splendid proportions, but must be chiseled and hammered before that consummation can be reached. Grief, struggle, disappointment, the whole range of sad experiences which fill life so full are the tools with which the great Artist will change your shape by slow degrees, and convert you from a mere block to a thing of beauty.—George H. Hepworth, D.D.

Consecrating Calamity (113).

Dr. Moon, of Brighton, just as his youth was flowering into manhood, was smitten with total blindness. He was a man of brilliant gifts, and he had fixed his desires upon great attainments. But in the calamity, all his radiant hopes appeared to have been wrecked. What then! In his own dawnless midnight, in a glorious act of faith in God, he consecrated "his talent of blindness" to the service of God. He invested it in the succor of all who shared his affliction, and he devised the system by which millions of blind people are now able to read, and to enter into riches that were hitherto concealed.—Selected.

The Vision of Disaster (114).

Dr. Dawson tells of a man who once said his whole life lay suddenly broken off in disaster; his work ended, his heart broken, himself in the hospital suffering cruel pain; and then he said: "Oh, Dawson, what visions of God I had as a I lay in the hospital! What a sense of eternity, and the reality of things spiritual! I tell you, if I knew today I could only gain such visions of God and truth by repeating my sufferings, I would crawl upon my hands and knees across this continent to get that disease."—The Evangelistic Note.

The Inevitable (115).

Goethe made it one of the rules of his life to avoid everything that could suggest painful ideas, but they found him out in the end. When the physician prescribed blisters for that strange Russian woman, Marie Bashkirsteff, to check the ravages of tuberculosis, the vain, cynical girl wrote: "I will put on as many blisters as they like. I shall be able to hide the mark by bodices trimmed with flowers, and lace, and tulle, and a thousand other things that are worn without being required; it may even look pretty. Ah, I am comforted."

When Marie Antoinette passed through the streets on her wedding day in Paris, strict orders were sent out to the police that the lame, and the blind, and the crippled, and the ragged were to be carefully kept out of her way, lest the sight of them should detract from her joy and happiness at her reception; but it was not a great while before that gay butterfly of happiness had a very close view of the wretched and the miserable.

We have in our own time a popular fad, largely built up on the idea of keeping cheerful and happy by shutting your eyes to pain and sorrow, and the hard things of life; but, like all the rest, it is sure to fall. Phil-

osophize as we will, pain is sure to find us out, and the arrows from the quiver of sorrow will pierce our hearts.—Crafts.

Afflictions Overbalanced by Blessings (116).

God's blessings are so much greater than any possible human afflictions that any man receiving the first is pronounced "blessed," no matter what he may have of the second. Has man ecstasy of agony? God can reverse it all into ecstasy of pleasure. Between two notes in jarring discord he can put a third that shall make all into delicious harmony. Martyrs have waved aloft their blazing fingers like torches, and shouted for the joy of victory, notwithstanding the fire. Bodies have writhed in pain that spectators could hardly endure to see, but the soul has gloried in the rapture of God's visitations. John Huss kneeling beside the fagot-piled stake poured out his soul in prayer, using the words of the Thirty-first Psalm, and closed with its grand pæan, "Blessed be the Lord: for he hath showed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city. O love the Lord, all ye his saints. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."—Bishop H. W. Warren.

The Bright Side of Trial (117).

There is a hopeful side even to failure. As success is one of the ways to failure, so failure is one of the ways to success—not referring to those who get rich by dishonest bankruptcies. The prodigal was nearer true success when he sat in the swine pasture, a ragged bankrupt, than when he revelled in his costly vices. "If they had not perished," said a man of his business enterprises, "I should have perished." It had cost him his money to save his morals, but "the life is more than meat." It was money or life, and he had saved his soul-life in the loss of his money.

But even in a worldly point of view, failure often leads to success, by rousing a man to greater energy, or leading him to greater watchfulness, or putting him in a more suitable place.

A man who weighs one hundred and fifty pounds on the earth would weigh only two pounds on the planet Mars, and so could hardly stand; while on the sun he would weigh two tons and so would sink, like a stone in the sea, into its hot marshes. Each man is too light for some places, too heavy for others, and just right for others. Failing in a work for which he is unfitted often brings him to his true place. Judge Tourgee's failure as a reconstruction lawyer led to his success as a great novelist and editor.—Crafts.

XIII. THE GAIN OF GODLINESS.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . . but his delight is in the law of the Lord. . . . He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water . . . whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—Psalms 1:1-3.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Three fundamentals of the adequate religion are in evidence in these verses:

1. It is a bringer of "blessing;" temporal and eternal; material and spiritual; and, it might be added, individual and general, national and social.

2. These blessings are secured by linking the human with the divine; by the gracious intention of the divine in the sphere of the human, "The law of the Lord."

3. This alliance of the divine with the human for the blessing of the latter is conditioned upon the latter's adopting of a certain attitude toward, entering into special relations with, the divine. Faith, penitence, love. "Delight."—Adapted from W. P. Paterson, D. D.

* * *

1. Great truths must underlie great deeds. Deep-seated convictions are the spring of action back of real achievement. "The law of the Lord."

2. Great truths are wrought into great character by earnest meditation upon them; by mental and affectional absorption. "Doth he meditate day and night?"

* * *

The Supreme Blessedness: The only primary and sufficient safeguard for any one of us is the religion of Christ. "Blessed." Religion opens the widest, freest outlook for the mind into the eternal truth, enlarging a man's range of spiritual sight, and enabling him to judge of all things in both worlds in their due proportion. "In thy law doth he meditate." It supplies us for that reason with the only true and perfect standing by which to test the value of things, and so corrects the one-sided materialistic standard of business. "Like a tree." It transforms business itself from an ignoble to a noble calling, because it substitutes for the principle of mere profit the ideal of service.—Selected.

* * *

"Planted by the streams." The beautiful picture of the tree bearing its fruit because its roots draw sustenance from the near river, has become the common symbol of the fruitfulness of the soul which drinks continually from the river of living water which flows from the throne of God. The soul is as dependent upon God as the tree is upon the waters. It is made for God as the tree is made for the river. Large, vigorous, efficient life, fruitful life is his who communes with God. Perhaps there is a little danger in our days with our great emphasis

on service and the doing of good works to neglect this meditation in God's law, this communion with him which makes a rich and fruitful life. We must guard against this. For our lives will surely grow both weak and barren if we neglect this contact with the life-giving spirit. The very effectiveness of our service and our abiding social enthusiasms rest in our oneness with God. He cannot give much who is not continually enriching himself.

"Doth not wither." See how our Psalmist emphasizes the fact that he who abides in God possesses the blessedness of an unfading youth. There is no such thing as age in God. He whose life is hid with Christ in God, partakes of God's unchanging youth. He has discovered the bread of life; the fountain of eternal youth. His leaf never withers.—Rev. Frederick Lynch.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Deep-Rooted Faith (118).

We have here a reminder of the righteous man's security. "He shall be like a tree that is planted." His faith lays hold upon the great realities. His convictions thrust themselves so deeply into the great truths of God's Word that it is impossible to dislodge them. His purposes go down through superficial fleeting things to the eternal will of the Almighty, and so he stands steadfast and unmoved, even though the fiercest storms may beat upon him. To move a full-grown tree from its place is an exceedingly difficult matter. You scrape away the superficial covering of soil, only to discover that there are great roots, like mighty arms, reaching down into the earth, and as you follow their endless ramifications you recognize that, though you can destroy the tree, you cannot uproot it. What a striking picture of a righteous man, with deep-settled convictions! You know always just where to find him. The wind may drift the sand or the snow, upon the surface of the earth, hither and thither, but the great tree remains just where it was planted.

Seventy years ago, with his own hands, my father planted three maple trees, in front of the old Vermont home, where he was born, and where his father and grandfather had lived before him. In front of the dooryard a river flows over innumerable stones, singing its merry song as it goes to join the Connecticut. Around it are the great hills with their rugged shapes, clothed, to the very summit, with luxuriant foliage. It is a beautiful scene to the eyes of every beholder. But when I revisit it next summer, I should not be more surprised to see one of the great hills removed from its place, than I should be to find that the three great maples no longer cast their shade over what was once my father's dwelling. They were planted there nearly three-quarters of a century ago, and no storm that beats upon the granite hills is able to uproot them. And so I speak to some, who a quarter or a half century ago, planted the roots of their faith, upon the Rock of Christ Jesus. Feeble enough it seemed, when the first public confession of love to Christ was given. But through the years through storm and tempest, through summer's heat and winter's frost, your faith has been deepening, until, if the opportunity were given, there are many who would gladly respond in the triumphant words of the apostle, "I know him in whom I have believed."—Rev. Walter M. Walker.

Growth In Grace (119).

Slowly, throughout all the universe, the temple of God is being built. Wherever in any world, a soul, by free-willed obedience, catches the fire of God's likeness, it is set into the growing walls a living stone. When in your hard fight, in your tiresome drudgery, or in your terrible temptation, you catch the purpose of your being and give yourself to God, and so give him the chance to give himself to you, your life, a living stone, is taken up and set into the growing wall. Wherever souls are being tried and ripened, in whatever commonplace and homely ways, there God is hewing out the pillars for his temple. O, if the stone can only have some vision of the temple of which it is to lie a part forever, what patience must fill it as it feels the blows of the hammer and knows that success for it is simply to let itself be wrought into what shape the Master wills!—Phillips Brooks.

Consecrated Concentration (120).

"Day and Night." Religion is a challenge to the noblest in every man. Nothing so calls out the last pound of one's energies as the appeal to live a consistent Christian life.—Charles Bayard Mitchell.

A Field For Splendid Achievement (121).

The fire which laid London in ruins gave the famous architect, Christopher Wren, an opportunity, unprecedented in modern history, of displaying his powers. Let the Church of Christ in like manner behold its opportunity, presented by a world in ruins, for the displaying of all its socially regenerative and constructive powers. The architecture of the soul affords a field for effort that immeasurably exceeds the possibilities of art expression through stone and mortar and pigments. The "curved line of beauty" bends closely in every case over the "straight line of duty." There are infinite possibilities of development in life when it is lived in devotion to the true, the good, and the beautiful.—Zion's Herald.

Christianity Ennobles Character (122).

Dr. Fitchett, in his "Beliefs and Unbelief," has well remarked: "That the denial of Christianity does not shape conduct instantly. The very unbelief which rejects Christianity cannot escape its influence. Something of the fragrance of Christianity is in the very air of the world. The wholesome salt of its ethics is in the blood of the race. The man of no faith is still the child of whole centuries of faith."

Few of us can realize what a country is like in the absence of Christian ideals and Christian sanctions and influences. James Russell Lowell, author of "The Biglow Papers," and formerly American Ambassador to England, is said at one time to have challenged a company of unbelievers to find "a place on this planet ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort, and security, supporting and educating his children unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, womanhood honored, and human life held in due regard; . . . where the gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundations and made decency and security possible." Mrs. Isabella Bishop, the distinguished traveler,

has testified from her own wide observation: "There is scarcely a single thing that makes for righteousness in the life of non-Christianized nations. Everywhere perversion of justice, oppression of the weak, degradation prevail. Self-love is the sole law of morality, and self-interest the chief motive of religion."

Imagine the world's outlook with manhood, womanhood, social, mental, moral, and religious life shaped after the pattern of the Koran or any of the false systems now dissolving before our eyes.

Wendell Phillips's argument for Bible morality compresses the substance of volumes into a sentence: "The answer to the Shastra is India; the answer to Confucianism is China; the answer to the Koran is Turkey; the answer to the Bible is the Christian civilization of Protestant Europe and America."

Newman Smythe has said that "unbelief saves itself from universal contempt by really living on a wider faith than it creates or allows. . . . What if unbelief should live up to its creed or no creed?"

It is very suggestive of the sterility and hopelessness of all radical unbelief when we hear men talk of the failure of Christianity and Christian morals, for by their own confession it is the Christian law which alone furnishes the standards by which they determine the conduct of men when they sit in judgment upon their action; and it is this very law which is daily judging the life of the nations and of the world.

The late Gail Hamilton once said: "It requires no learning to see that if the stamp of Christ and everything which has come from it into the life of the world could be suddenly and completely burned out of the memory and consciousness and record of man, society would be a chaos." When we therefore hear of "good skeptics," "virtuous unbelievers," "exemplary agnostics," it is well for us to remember that these fruits are from the very roots which they affect to renounce and ignore.—William Harrison, D.D.

Godliness is Gain (123).

Does it pay? is the instinctive question of the man of the world when a proposition is presented. The man of the world may be challenged to deny an affirmative answer to this question put about religion. It is wondrous strange that any should fail to say it, whether he is religious or not. Expert economists tell us that the cause of hard times lies deeper than the tariff or the currency. It is found in waste. This will hardly be denied. But where is there such waste as in our sins and follies? "An increase of one-tenth in demand is sufficient to change adversity into prosperity, but this country spends every year more than one-tenth of its product in drink alone. Who can measure what it would mean to our industries if the billion dollars we thus squander each year were spent for shoes and food and homes? Factories would be running overtime and then still be swamped in orders. New York has been wailing of late over the thousands of her people who go to bed hungry, yet last year she spent at Coney Island, her great playground, forty-five million dollars, or three times what the nation paid Napoleon for Louisiana and six times what we paid for Alaska. Thus what we waste in our sins and our follies far exceeds what we lack in necessities and comforts."—Selected.

The Religious Root (124). The clergyman must recognize the fact that every political, social, economic and humanitarian question has its moral and religious "bearings."—Samuel Fallows.

Christianity's Blessings (125).

Material as well as spiritual blessings follow in Christianity's wake. Dr. Joseph Parker said: "Christianity has turned over more money than any other thought of man. Christianity has kept more work people, paid more wages, patronized more art than any other religion, or any other conception of the human mind. The highest artist could not have lived without the religious genius and the religious fact. This is true in sculpture, in painting, in music, in architecture, in poetry. Take out of the world all the cathedrals, all the chapels, all the churches; take away all the monuments Christianity has erected; take away all pictures that represent religious or Christian subjects; burn all the oratorios and all the music that derives its sublimity from Christian inspiration; take away all the books that have been printed, all the engravings that have been published, representing Christian thought and history; go into the nursery and into the drawingroom, and into the studio, and take out everything that Christian thought has done, and then, viewed commercially, you have inflicted the greatest possible loss upon the civilized world. Everything shall live whither the river cometh; plenty of business, plenty of work, clearing forests, building cities, exchanging merchandise; the seas alive with vessels, and the desert encroached upon for more city room."

XIV. LIFE MEANS OPPORTUNITY. (BACCALAUREATE)

"He brought me forth into a large place."—Psalm 18:19.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Charles C. Albertson, D.D., in preaching to the graduating class of Adelphi College, on this text, gave prominence to the following phases of truth:

This has been the song of all God's servants in every age—"He brought me forth into a large place." Obedience to God never contracts our powers. Christ does not lead men backward, but onward, outward, upward. Matthew was led into a large place when he left the toll-booth to follow Jesus. Peter had never seen anything larger than the Sea of Galilee until Jesus made him a fisher of men. Paul at his best was only a theological hair-splitter, a heresy-hunter, until Christ appeared to him and filled his heart with a passion for the preaching of the gospel and the glory of the cross. If the voice of patriarch and prophet and apostle could be heard today it would cry, "Never say 'No' to God. If he call thee, go. He will lead thee into a large place."

I. No experience is more common to the most of us than a certain contempt for the littleness of the things with which we are compelled to live. The farm boy who leaves the country goes to the city to seek a more abundant life. He dreams the city calls him to large enterprises. He does not know how cramped are the lodgings of most dwellers in the city, how small a part of it he will occupy, how easily the solitary individual is lost in the crowd.

II. Blessed is imagination, which expands the walls and lifts the low roof of life, and fills it with dreams of what might have been and of what may be. Blessed is travel, for it enlarges the horizon of the traveler if he be a close observer. It is a distinct step in one's mental development when he first acquaints himself with the language and customs of another country than his own.

III. Blessed is literature, for it broadens life. To most of us time to travel is denied. But books are not denied us—books of travel, of history, of science, of fiction. A late writer advises us to read that fiction which portrays life as different as possible from our own. We hardly need that counsel. A certain instinct guides us in that direction. Dissatisfaction with the limitations of our lives impels us to read stories of soldiers and knights and heroes and heroic deeds. Far-off ages and far-off civilizations attract us. We broaden our lives by changing our viewpoint.

IV. Blessed is everything that tends to widen our sympathies and give us the consciousness of new relations. Blessed is the religion that takes us out of ourselves, makes us superior to our limitations, creates a new world for us. Supremely blessed is the gospel of Jesus Christ, for of all religions that the world has seen it offers its disciples the most abundant life.

V. The distinctive glory of Christianity is its expansive spirit. The keynote of it is the greatest possible development of the individual. It aims to make every man a king, every heart the throne of the Eternal, every life a consecrated temple. "The humblest life that lives may be divine." It is a great undertaking, and it is unique in Christianity. There is nothing in Confucianism to lead the individual soul to greatness. Prudential maxims and conventional morality may make a man a better machine, but they do not increase his spiritual resources. Buddha taught the extinguishment of the individual. Epictetus taught the suppression of emotion, the denial of desire. Christ's doctrine is: Diminish nothing that is right; repress nothing that may be turned to good; do not diminish your interests, but multiply them; live the largest possible life; conquer your sorrows by making the sorrows of others your care; master your desires by giving them a new direction; extend life on every side. Is not this the Master's teaching? Is it not the uniform testimony of experience that Christian discipleship leads every faithful soul into a large place? It is sin that narrows life, clips the wings with which the spirit would soar to lofty heights. Hence the conquest of sin by grace is like the liberation of a slave. Iron doors and brazen gates are torn asunder and the captive moves out into God's universe to learn how life enlarges with each new step in grace.

VI. Jesus Christ wants us to see, to hear, to think. to feel, to act, in view of infinite relations. He wants us to know that selfishness turns life into a squirrel cage, that envy, greed, falsehood, cruelty, base appetites imprison men, make life small, and that the spirit of holiness extends all the boundaries of the inner man. Christ was always calling men—Philip, Nathanael, the rich young ruler, Zacchaeus, Bartimeus, Lazarus, Nicodemus. Did any of them follow him and fail to find the meaning of abundant life? Did any one of them turn back who did not turn away from glory and honor and immortality?

* * *

Rev. John Howard Melish, in addressing the graduating class of Packer Institute on the same general theme, said:

My friends of the graduating class, I desire to talk to you about religion. For months and years now you have been in search of knowledge. The past has looked down upon you in the pages of history, and you know something of its great events and noble characters; literature, with its exquisite forms and inspired imagination, has beckoned to your spirits; science, the cold and accurate voice of organized knowledge, has made its unimpassioned and enlightening appeal to your reason; the languages, ancient and modern, have tried to unlock for you the door into the life and thought of other peoples. Knowledge is indeed a glorious thing. It emancipates the mind, steadies the will, and inspires the heart. But I wish to put before you a yet more glorious thing. I once spent a night on the top of a mountain. At sunrise the villages in the valley below were shrouded in gloom, their street-lamps still burning, their inhabitants asleep, while we on the mountains were rejoicing in the light. Life, it seems to me, possessed merely of knowledge, is like the villages in the valley at sunrise. But life, which is illuminated by religion, stands, like the angel of the Apocalypse, in the sun. "I saw an angel standing in the sun."

What lies before you now, as the doors of Packer close behind you, is life. Class prophetesses try to scan the future and tell each member her destiny; one is to attain fame and another wealth; one to know the blessedness of children and the other the joy of a career; one is to be a sunny influence wherever she goes, and another is to be forceful and practical. Whether or not these fond wishes of your classmates will be realized, the future alone can tell. But this you and I know: here is life, a marvelous composite of many elements, an unfathomed mystery, a wonderful possiblity. It is like a piece of tapestry woven of many threads, some somber, some gay, all making a design, the exact character of which no one will ever know. Life for you will have many experiences, now filled with happiness, now surcharged with suffering. What does it all mean, how interpret it, how meet it with interest and courage? The final answer to this question is that of religion; that in this life, in its deepest recesses and all its experiences, both good and bad, joyful and sad, we meet a Life which is not ourselves, a spirit and purpose Divine. It is this which gives life a glorious meaning.

I desire to put religion to you, first, as it affects the life of each one as an individual, and second, as it affects the life which we all live in common.

* * *

Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D.D., in a baccalaureate sermon, said:

The University will come with speedy succor to enable the flower of the rising generation to solve its own problems, to control civilization for God and humanity, and to serve its day by fulfilling its various callings. The life of mere cognition and contemplation is lived by a very few. For the vast majority knowing is the aid of doing, an equipment of thought and plan for action. The largest personal concentration, the bringing of the mind to heed at call, the focusing of ideas there in spite of distaste, weariness or pain, the incitement of that courage, which wades into the disagreeable intent on extracting the sweetness from the destroyer. A rooted trouble of modern America is the nervous fevered uselessness, which arises from this lack of voluntary concentration. Interesting and versatile people who cannot be attracted to important and significant truth are our despair, and in the time of trouble they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Dean Shaler, of Harvard, wrote: "The youths of the day have far less capacity for serious work than their fathers. There has been a curious degradation in the less studious half of the college men." The current cheap sophisticated nostrums which take refuge in a spurious transcendentalism have one intelligent mark; they estimate aright the constitutional defect of our day. That day will surely come to an end, and if experience is any guide other days will dawn wherein we must arise and play the man. Let us rejoice that for these days we can prepare to be crossed and thwarted, but never to be downcast. Then the wisdom of our toil will be made manifest, and then will the foolish ones eat of the fruit of their folly and be satiated with their own devices. Those who have learned aright what to provide and what to teach will be able:

To set the Cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize.
To honor while you strike him down
The foe that comes with fearless eyes.
To count the life of battle good,
And dear the land that gave you birth
And dearer yet the brotherhood
That binds the brave of all the earth.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Specialization for the Sake of Service (126).

Over the seas, on the sands of Egypt, stands the Pyramid of Cheops. There are some 2,000,000 blocks of stone piled one on another, averaging 40 cubic feet to every block. It required the labor of 100,000 men, we are told, working thirty years, to construct it. And when it was finished, what was it for? A sepulcher—the tomb of one man especially. There you see the embodiment of that culture which made the many work and slave for the one.

Today we have reversed that order. Now it is the one for the many. Go back only a few years into a little house in Italy. There is a child of an Irish mother and an Italian father. He is playing with some wires and batteries until his father comes into the room and smashes the entire outfit, disgusted by what he thinks is the boy's waste of time. It is Marconi. And when, four years ago, the Republic went down, and one year ago the Titanic called over the waste of waters for help in the hour of agony, it was the voice of the little child that summoned help from afar. It was the one for the many. It was specialization in magnificent and mighty service.

After all, it is the human interest which must save our education from defeat. We must keep our humanity vigorous and true. It is when educated men refuse to serve that the world drops back like lead. We are members one of another. We have a city to be ennobled by righteous living. We have a State to be kept free from shame. We have a country to love and to labor for. We have a society sadly torn by selfishness and greed. We have perplexing problems of industry and government and charity. I entreat you to accept responsibility with clean hands and pure hearts—for we are one body and we share our duty to preserve the unity of life in fellowship of varied service.—L. Mason Clarke, D.D.

The Liberty of Truth (127).

Last Friday I was in Annapolis. Standing on the grounds of the military academy, I looked across the harbor toward the Spanish battleship. That Spanish battleship was once the flagship of the king's fleet. Sunk at Santiago, a wrecking boat recovered the ship, towed it to Annapolis, where it is used as a training vessel for sailor boys. One day a group of foreign diplomats took a private car and journeyed from Washington over to Annapolis. There an old admiral met them and acted as guide in showing these foreigners objects of interest at the academy. In the course of their walks about the grounds, the admiral brought his visitors to a point where they could look out on the

Mercedes. "That is the Spanish battleship," said the officer. "It was sunk at Santiago. Afterward the flagship was raised, towed here to Annapolis, where it is used as a training vessel for recruits." Not until that moment did anyone realize what all this would mean to the Spanish gentleman, and no one wished to give pain to the diplomat. The old, grizzled Spaniard spoke slowly, as if to himself: "I was at Santiago. My ship went down; I was drawn into an American rowboat. But Spain gave this new continent to the Republic and now Spain's flagship of the king is become the least of the servants of liberty." The old diplomat was a brave man, and it is said that he exclaimed: "The new world is liberty and self-government. Soon or late all the battleships of all the monarchies must become serving vessels for the cause of man!" And oft in my dreams I see Liberty leading the pilgrim band out of the wilderness—Liberty, her sword of justice red with wrath against injustice, her girdle truth, her garment purity, her atmosphere love and good will, and come soon or late all the monarchies must march in her triumphal procession up the hills of time.—Newell Dwight Hillis.

The Call of Life (128).

James A. Garfield heard the call of the sea when he was a lad, and only the love of a widowed mother kept him from following a seafaring life. Why is the sea so attractive to many? Because of its bounty, its unmeasured space. It is a touching fact that at the end of his life at Elberon, the eyes of the dying President rested lovingly, longingly, on the sea. Mr. Blaine suggests, in his eulogy, that then his friend "heard the great waves breaking on the farther shore and felt upon his wasted brow the breath of the eternal morning." Thomas Marshall of Kentucky, a man of genius and power, expressed his desire to be buried in an open field and not in a crowded cemetery. "I have been crowded all my life," he said, "give me room for my grave." If one who has led a life of intense activity and great prominence feels this sense of limitation, is it strange that others are dissatisfied, whose ordinary lives are best symbolized by "one raindrop falling on moor, or meadow, or mountain, one flake of snow melting into the immeasurable deep."

I have heard a young lawyer say, "When I was in college I had great ambitions. I planned to make myself an authority on international law, but now that I am out I am compelled to try mean little cases before mean little juries." He had not found the large place he sought. The youth who would be a painter must be a clerk, and the man with an artist's soul is selling tea and coffee. Longfellow tells us of one "whom nature made a poet but whom Destiny made a schoolmaster." Our faculties seem fitted for a greater sphere than that in which we move. Literature is full of the expression of this fact. "Songs of Unrest" would fill volumes. Who of us busy daily with little vexatious problems would not prefer to deal with great ones? Who of us fighting battles daily which only God can see would not prefer to fight an epoch-making battle? It is the insignificance of our lives that frets us. So, whatever enlarges life in any right direction is a benefaction.—Melish.

Your "After-Man" (129).

Your "After-man," have you ever thought of him; the sort of creature you will be ten years, twenty years, or even thirty years from now? His destiny is in your hands, in your keeping. You can, by your actions, either make his life happy or miserable. It is on you alone he depends, and he has to depend without a chance to plead his case.

What sort of a brain and body are you going to leave for inheritance to that dim, shadowy person whose life will be in the future? Will it be a body strong and active, a mind sharp and acute, a nervous system that is in normal order; or will he have to do with a sickly body, a feeble brain, because you forgot him, because you thought you lived only in the present, thought that your actions would live and have influence only in the present?

His condition depends upon you. If you want a good investment, invest in your "After-man." Act today, so that twenty years from now, with a strong body and trained mind your "After-man" can step in and continue your work. To do this only a little care, a little forethought, a little restraint are necessary.

In the first place, evil habits should be shunned, for if you begin them you plant the seeds that will grow and mature in after years. Then the best use should be made of the present in training body and mind along useful lines, so that in years to come you will not be handicapped by lack of knowledge. It will pay, there is no doubt, pay tenfold. Indeed, you will never be sadder than if, twenty years from now, your "After-man" broken in body and mind, has occasion to exclaim:

"The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree I planted; they have torn me and I have bled."—Egbert Wallace.

XV. THE CONFIDENCE OF THE SAVED.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.—Psalm 23:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

There is only one sane way in which to face life without fear and without reproach. The follower of Christ who, with the great Apostle, knows that his Master is able to keep him, has discovered that way.

One's own keenness of intellect and shrewd resourcefulness are pitifully inadequate as with blinking vision he tries to penetrate the dense fogbank of the future. He knows not even what shall be on the morrow.

His own strong right hand, on which, in health and prosperity, he is tempted to rely with so much confidence, is like a chubby infant's dimpled fist against the forces of disease, accident and varied mischance, which may lurk in that future at any turn of the path, ready to spring out upon him.

But if he has entered into the everlasting compact with the omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving Saviour, if Christ and he are on terms of friendship, then all is different.

He is kept. He can say "The Lord is my Shepherd." He can sound forth that blessed battle song of faith: "I am persuaded that he is able to keep me." And he can meet all life's experiences dauntlessly. He is kept.

* * *

In preaching on this text Mr. Spurgeon said:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not really want." There are many things we wish for that we do not want, but there is no promise given that we shall have all we wish for. God hath not said that he would give us anything more than the bread or the water: "Bread shall be given him: his waters shall be sure;" and he has not broken that promise yet, has he? So, lift up thy head, and do not be afraid. All the way he hath led thee, and all the way he shall lead thee; this shall be thy constant joy. He is my shepherd, I shall not really want that which is absolutely necessary. Believer, here is thy jointure, here is thine inheritance, here is thine income, here is thy yearly living: "He is thy shepherd, and thou shalt not want." What is thy income, believer? "Why," you say, "it is different with some and others of us." Well, but a believer's income is still the same. This is it: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." That is my income, and it is yours, poor little one. That is the income of the poorest pauper in the workhouse who hath an interest in the grace of God. The Lord is her shepherd, she shall not want; that is the income of the poor foundling child that has to come to know the Lord in early life, and hath no other friend. The Lord is her shepherd, she shall not want: that is the widow's inheritance. The Lord is her shepherd, she shall not want: that is the orphan's fortune. The Lord is his shepherd, he shall not want: that is the believer's portion, his inheritance, his blessing.

"Well now," some may say, "but what is it worth?" Beloved, if

we could now change away this promise for a world of gold, we would not; we would rather live on this promise than live on the finest fortune in creation. We reckon that this is an inheritance that makes us rich indeed! "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Safety of the Believer (130).

A manufacturer of anchors and chains was exceedingly proud of a large photograph in one of his rooms, representing a ship riding at anchor in a tremendous storm. Some twenty vessels on that fatal day parted with their anchor and made shipwreck; whilst the anchor forged by my friend bore triumphantly all the stress of the terrible tempest.—Watkinson.

Trust in Time of Trouble (131).

"I simply don't know what to do with myself when the wind is from the east," complained a nervous invalid. "Well, you can't stop the wind," replied the practical physician, "but you surely can get into a cozy south room as far away from it as possible, and find some pleasant employment." This simple bit of advice is as good for the soul as for the body. There are east winds of gloom and unrest that will not down at command, but we can learn to retreat into some south corner of trust until they pass.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

Trust Energizes the Soul (132).

Science has recently proven that every thought we entertain does something to our body. Fear spoils digestion, anger benumbs the brain, jealousy disturbs the circulation, insincerity retards the breath, cowardice unsettles the nerves, anxiety robs sleep of its benefits, misunderstanding so upsets the action of the heart that various disorders may ensue. To the contrary, each positive, hopeful, energizing thought makes us live longer and better. Joy lubricates, despair clogs, the physical as well as the mental organism.

Try to realize the goodness and love of God—that you are his child, and that he has other children. That he has a niche for you to fill and he wants you to be happy in filling it. His joy was to go about doing good; and true happiness comes only to him who enters into the joy of his Lord.—C. S.

The Shepherd's Tender Care (133).

General Garibaldi one evening met a Sardinian shepherd lamenting the loss of a lamb out of his flock. The great-souled Garibaldi at once turned to his staff and announced his intention of scouring the mountain in search of the lamb. A grand expedition was organized. The lanterns were brought, and old officers of many a campaign started off full of zeal to hunt the fugitive. But no lamb was found, and the soldiers were ordered to their beds. The next morning Garibaldi's servant found him in bed fast asleep. When he was awakened, the general rubbed his eyes; and so did the servant, when he saw the old warrior take from under the covering the lost lamb, and direct him to carry it back to the shepherd. The general had kept up the search through the night until he had found it.

Equal to All Life's Demands (134).

Strength for every duty and trial is ours in Christ. One of the greatest of chemical discoverers, M. Berthelot, pressed on the attention of scientists the question of the possibility of tapping the central heat of the earth and making use of it as a perennial source of energy If this should ever come to pass there will be power enough for all possible purposes. Power to drive unlimited enginery, to illuminate the mightiest cities, to remove mountains. But revelation shows a far grander thing—it shows how the central blue has been tapped, and how the fullness of the heavenly power has become available for the moral uses of man. The Old Testament caught sight of this great truth; the New Testament shows how it has been fully realized in the gift of Pentecost. Let me not then faint. With the power of Christ perfected in my weakness, I am equal to every temptation, competent for every duty, equipped for every struggle, the master of every fear.—Watkinson.

The Secret of a Happy Life (135).

Dr. Schmucker, while walking out one day, met an old man singing.

"Father Miller," said the doctor, "why should an old man like yourself be so cheerful?"

"Not all are," remarked the old gentleman. "Well, then, why are you?" 'Because I belong to the Lord." "And are none others happy at your time of life?" "No, not one, my friendly questioner," said he, and his form straightened. "Listen to the truth from one who knows. And no man of three-score and ten shall be found to deny it. The devil has no happy old men!" That is the whole story of the Christian's secret of a happy life.—Selected.

"I Know Whom I Believe (136). "You really don't know what you believe," said a sneering voice, summing up theological difficulties in a manner that the speaker considered unanswerable. "But I know whom I have believed," replied the little woman quietly.—Northfield Calendar.

Kept (137). This sense of being safely kept; this tremendous certainty that we are immune from harm, is the very best preparation for free-handed service.

"All's Well" (138).

It is a great experience to be in a mighty storm at sea, when we have full confidence in the captain and the vessel. As the ship goes plowing resistlessly along through the dark night driven by its heart of fire, and one hears the lookout crying, "All's well," the soul,

"Into the consciousness of safety thrilled,
Swells vast to heaven,"

and claims kindred with and triumphs over the forces of the storm. A similar but greater experience is it when a storm comes down upon life's sea, and rayless darkness sets in, to know that the Great Captain is on board and to hear his voice across the storm proclaiming that all is well. Then and only then do we know the full meaning of that word "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."—Borden Parker Bowne.

Antidote For Anxiety and Worry (139).

There is one kind of trouble in the world which God never sends, and which never brings a blessing with it. It is the borrowed trouble which people get by worrying about tomorrow instead of being content to bear the burden of today. Most of the worry in this world is over trouble that never comes; and what is more foolish than to brood over troubles in anticipation of their coming? More people are killed by worry than by work. "Preventive medicine" is the great aim of true physicians today, and I present this divine philosophy of life as a safeguard against that neurotic degeneracy which threatens many today. Most of us are capable of a great deal of hard work if we do not get to worrying about it. Do the task of the day in its day and you will be free from the grinding worry of accumulated duty.—A. R. E. Wyant.

Calm Confidence (140).

"Can you do it?" a Korean was asked with reference to some church work. "We ask such questions as 'Can you do it?' about men's work, but not about God's work," was the quiet reply. To believe God strongly, to place the matter for which we pray entirely in his hands and trust him with it, brings a sense of comfort and security and rest that nothing else on earth can give. And God does not fail such faith as that. Sooner or later he honors it.—The C. E. World.

Allied With God (141).

W. T. Stead, who perished on the "Titanic," towards the end of his life abandoned a lucrative position on the press for conscientious reasons. "Can you afford to do this?" a friend asked him. "Well," he said, "you see, I have a very wealthy partner." "Who is he?" "God Almighty!" was the reply.—The Christian Herald.

XVI. THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

Blot Out My Transgressions.—Psa. 51:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in preaching on this text, used the following outline:

I. Looking at this triad of petitions, they teach us, first, how David thought of his sin; 1, observe the reiteration of the same earnest cry in all these clauses. It is not a mere piece of Hebrew parallelism. It is much more the earnestness of a soul that cannot be content with once asking for the blessings and then passing on, but dwells upon them with repeated supplication, not because it thinks that it shall be heard for its much speaking, but because it longs for them so eagerly; 2, notice, again, that he speaks of his evil as transgressions and as sin, using the plural and then the singular. He regards it first as being broken up into a multitude of isolated acts, and then as being all gathered into one knot, as it were, so that it is one thing. But he does not stop there. His sins are not merely a number of deeds, but they have, deep down below, a common root from which they all come, a center in which they all inhere. And so he says, not only "Blot out my transgressions," but "Wash me from mine iniquity;" 3, in all the petitions we see that the idea of his own single responsibility for the whole thing is uppermost in David's mind. It is "my transgression," it is "mine iniquity," and it is "my sin;" 4, the three words which the Psalmist employs for sin give prominence to different aspects of it. Transgression is not the same as iniquity, and iniquity is not the same as sin. The word rendered "transgression" literally means rebellion, a breaking away from, and setting one's self against, lawful authority. That translated "iniquity" literally means that which is twisted, bent. The word in the original for "sin" literally means missing a mark, an aim.

II. Those petitions show us how David thinks of forgiveness; 1, the first petition conceives of the Divine dealing with sin as being the erasure of a writing, perhaps of an indictment. Our past is a blurred manuscript, full of false things and bad things. We have to spread the writing before God and ask him to remove the stained characters from the surface that was once fair and unsoiled; 2, the second prayer, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity," does not need any explanation, except that the word expresses the antique way of cleasing garments by treading and beating. David then here uses the familiar symbol of a robe to express the "habit" of the soul, or, as we say, the character. That robe is all splashed and stained. He cries to God to make it a robe of righteousness and a garment of purity; 3, "Cleanse me from my sin." That is the technical word for the priestly act of declaring ceremonial cleanness.

III. These petitions likewise show us whence the Psalmist draws his confidence for such a prayer. His whole hope rests upon God's own character as revealed in the endless continuance of his acts of

love. And for us who have the perfect love of God perfectly expressed in his Son, that same plea is incalculably strengthened, for we can say, "According to thy tender mercies in thy dear Son, blot out my transgressions."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Restoration (142).

Once after Moody had finished preaching, a little boy with handsome face and form was brought to the platform by an officer, who said he had found him wandering in the crowd, evidently lost. Mr. Moody took the little fellow in his arms, and, standing before the great throng, asked the people to look at the lost child.

"This boy has a father who is no doubt at this moment looking for him with anxious heart," said the preacher. "The father is more anxious to find his boy than his boy is to be found. It is just so with our Heavenly Father. He is seeking us today; seeking us with unspeakable solicitude. For long years he has been following you, O sinner! He is following you still. He is calling to you today."

At this instant a man was seen elbowing his way toward the platform. As he drew near the little boy saw him, and, running over the platform, threw himself with a bound into his father's outstretched arms. The multitude witnessed the scene with breathless attention, and then broke out into a mighty cheer.

"Thus," cried Mr. Moody, "will God receive you if you will only run to him today."—Selected.

How God Pardons (144).

Our Commissioner went to the Governor of the State and asked him if he wouldn't pardon out five men at the end of six months who stood highest on the list for good behavior. The Governor consented, and the record was to be kept secret; the men were not to know anything about it. The six months rolled away and the prisoners were brought up—1,100 of them—and the President of the commission came up and said: "I hold in my hand pardons for five men." Every man held his breath, and you could almost hear the throbbing of every man's heart. "Pardon for five men," and the Commissioner went on to tell the men how they had got these pardons. The first name was called—"Reuben Johnson"—and he held out the pardon, but not a man moved. He looked all around, expecting to see a man spring to his feet at once; but no one moved. The Commissioner turned to the officer and inquired: "Are all the convicts here?" "Yes," was the reply, "Reuben Johnson, come forward and get your pardon; you are no longer a criminal." Still no one moved.

The real Reuben Johnson was looking all the time behind him, and around him to see where Reuben was. The Chaplain saw him standing right in front of the Commissioner, and beckoned to him; but he only turned and looked around him, thinking that the Chaplain might mean some other Reuben. A second time he beckoned to Reuben and called to him, and a second time the man looked around. At last the Chaplain said to him: "You are the Reuben." He had been there for nineteen years, having been placed there for life, and he could not conceive

it would be for him. At last it began to dawn upon him, and he took the pardon from the Commissioner's hand, saw his name attached to it, and wept like a child. This is the way that men make out pardons for men; but, thank God, we have not to come tonight and say we have pardons for only five men—for those who have behaved themselves. We have assurance of pardon for every man.—Moody.

A Crisis and a Process (145).

As John McNeill puts it: "It is a crisis with a view to a process." The crisis comes when you decide to take God's side against sin. That takes only a moment, but a whole lifetime will be required for the process of growth in all the Christian graces. Do not try to become a Christian by any process; do that by an act of the will, accepting Christ as your Saviour, and take God's side against sin. General O. O. Howard, while a young soldier at Fort Brook, Tampa, Fla., accepted Christ as his Saviour and took God's side against sin. I heard General Howard say to three thousand soldiers at Tampa: "Boys, forty-one years ago, two miles from this tabernacle, I surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he has been my Commander ever since. I want to tell you that he is the best General that ever led an army."

"Though Your Sins Be As Scarlet" (146).

A felon in the city jail was awaiting the hour of his execution. His crime was almost without parallel. He had murdered the mother of his own nine children. The lower court of justice had condemned him to die; the Supreme Court had confirmed the sentence, and fixed the date of execution. I had preached to him and prayed with him for several months. He heard with close, respectful but undemonstrative attention. Dr. Gross Alexander went, at my request, and preached a sermon of great gospel power and personal tenderness. There were five persons present—the two preachers, the man himself, and two fellow prisoners. At the close of these services, with no one present save Dr. Alexander and myself, the prisoner said: "Gentlemen, I want a last word with you. I would give a thousand worlds to undo what I have done. Yes, I would give my own life ten times over to recall the deed, but I cannot. I went into my cell," pointing to the gloomy place behind him, "and, kneeling down, told God all about it, and asked him to forgive me. And he did. I am not afraid to die now. Gentlemen, look into my eyes and see if I look like a man who is afraid to die. Now will you please send a message for me to my daughters? Write to ———, the oldest, who has charge of my little daughters. Tell her that she is the only mother whom the little ones have now, and that she must tell them never to do anything that God would not have them do." The message to the others was as sweet and tender as a renewed father could indite out of a loving heart. He went to his execution the next day without a tremor. But my same pious and skeptical friend asks again: "Do you think he was saved?" Yes. Just as surely as was that other penitent felon on Calvary, to whose dying prayer Jesus gave answer: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Saved From Sin (147).

There has been devised no plan, God"s mercy has looked to the

devising of no plan of saving you in your sins. Do you mark that? I say there is no such thing as salvation in sin, but the essence of salvation is salvation from sin. Nor do I hold out the hope to any person here, that today, your salvation can be completed. Do you mark that? It may be completed thus far, that you may today be delivered from the condemnation of the law. You may today be acquitted, justified, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and you may today have put within you a spirit and principle of eternal life. What, then, does salvation mean? Now, let us get the thought clearly before us. First of all, it is salvation from sin, from sin, not in it. The part of it that is instantaneously attainable is deliverance from the penalty of sin and the putting within us a spiritual nature. That is instantaneous. I say that justification and regeneration may come in a moment, but deliverance from the corruption of our evil nature is not instantaneous.—Rev. B. H. Carroll, D. D.

The Sense of Sin (148).

In an article, "Can Japan Have a Spiritual Revival?" the Rev. R. E. McAlpine says: It almost begins to look as though a spiritual quickening of the multitudes can hardly be expected among these people for the reason that a sense of sin, in the hearts of most of them, has become all but extinct. Buddhism teaches them that sin is not lawlessness against God, which earns the wages of death, but a failure to obey blind law, resulting in misfortune and suffering; that personal holiness is not keeping Christ's commands, but chanting Buddha's name. Thus the conscience is benumbed, as with an opiate.

The sense of sin has reached almost the vanishing point in many minds, and to offer them a "Saviour from sin" is almost like speaking to them in an unknown tongue. Hence the difficulty of a wide and general movement in a spiritual direction. Nevertheless, every time we can get the ear of a sincere soul, and the Holy Spirit begins through the word, "to convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgment," the same results are seen as in other lands. It becomes apparent then that Japan instead of being one of the easiest fields, and one likely soonest to yield, is a regular Port Arthur.

"Forgiveness With Thee" (149).

At the close of the twelfth century, Henry, son of Henry II, conspired against his father and took refuge in a walled city, to which the king laid siege. In the course of the campaign the son was woundec unto death; and, being overwhelmed with contrition, sent a messenger to his father asking that he might be permitted to see his face. His request was refused. Once and again he sent his humble appeal in vain. At length a procession passed through the gateway of the city under a flag of truce bearing the dying prince upon a stretcher; but ere it reached the royal pavilion he had breathed his last. As the bearers waited there, they heard from within a strong cry like that of David, "O Henry, my son; would God I had died for thee!" The Lord, with whom we have to do, makes no such mistakes. He knows the deep secrets of the heart; and, where is true penitence, he has sworn by himself that he will not reject it.—Selected.

XVII. SOUL SHELTER.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—Psalm 91:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. B. H. Carroll, D.D., said: When Alexander the Great led the armies of united Greece from Europe over into Asia, the first country that he subjugated was Asia Minor, and there were established in time certain Greek colonies or cities, which preserved the Greek civilization for many hundreds of years. The principal of these were Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Pergamos, Sardis, Laodicea and Philadelphia, and the last of these was Philadelphia. I mean to say that it was the smallest of the cities. It was remote from the sea. It was up in the mountains. It had not the large commerce of the other places. And yet concerning this city of Philadelphia and its faith the great historians of the world have written much. About the time that our Lord was passing from childhood into manhood this city was destroyed by an earthquake. It was a volcanic soil in the mountains, and earthquakes there were very frequent. Volcanic soil generally is good for vine growing, and the coins of that city generally had on them on one side either Bacchus, the god of wine, or a bacchant, one worshiping Bacchus.

In that most marvelous book, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," by the infidel Gibbon, is a very marvelous tribute to the prophecies in John's book of Revelation concerning these seven cities of Asia. Gibbon says that when Ephesus fell the church lost its first golden candelstick, as prophesied by John, and Laodicea followed, and today the remains of its circus and its three theaters cannot be traced. As to Pergamos and Thyatira, they speedily fell before the Saracen rising in the sixth century under Mahomet, and the mosque succeeded the church of Jesus Christ. Smyrna, while still extant, is supported by foreign population and trade. Gibbon says: "Philadelphia alone was saved, either by prophecy or by its own courage."

* * *

The following treatment of this theme was used by an able homilist:

We are secured against the sorrows of life by the consolations and hopes of the gospel. The dark paths of life are full of dread possibilities. The pessimist is satisfied that, if the condition of the race had been just a little worse, and life had been a trifle more terrible, it would have been impossible for it to have been at all. Reason often with difficulty keeps her seat. Ghastly disease, speechless anguish, the strokes of misfortune, death's divorces, and a thousand nameless stings and sorrows are well calculated to extinguish our joy and pride. Travelers tell of that awful morgue on the summit of the St. Bernard, all of whose ghastly tenants perished in the same way—the victims of the storm-fiend. But, if such a thought is lawful, what would be the overwhelming spectacle of a morgue presenting at a glance the sad faces, the blasted lives, the broken hearts, of even a single generation; countless men,

women and children, victims of the avalanche, the hurricane, the night, and frost, which constitute the tragedy of human life.

II. The poignancy and magnitude of human suffering can be neither denied nor ignored; to be dealt with effectually it must be transcended. This the faith of Christ accomplishes. By consoling and fortifying the soul in the highest degree does the faith of Christ render us invincible in the days of darkness. Against mighty sorrows and dread possibilities it sets the strong consolations and glorious hopes of the gospel of redemption, sanctification, and immortality. Just as we get and keep firm hold of these doctrines do we bear our sorrows with dignity, tranquillity, and the air of a conqueror. A figure full of majesty and grace dawns upon the morgue that the pessimist depicts, converting it into a house of mercy, a hospital of healing, a chamber of peace, a gate of heaven. Only God can sustain, but he can.

* * *

Another unfolded it as follows: I. The Christian in a World of Care. Few problems are more familiar in our homes than those which have to do with temporal anxieties. These are a part of the divine discipline of character. We live in a world of care. Whoever we may be or whatever our beliefs, there are three necessities no one of us may ignore; the need for food, for clothing, for shelter. Lift these burdens and thousands of hearts would be lightened. Multitudes live but a day from need. Sudden misfortune would threaten most of us. Care is the lurking shadow in the morrow's thought. We forget that this world is our Father's world and that we are in a Father's care.

II. The Cause of Care. Care is essentially distrust of God, and therefore a spiritual problem. It arises from the division of our allegiance between God and Mammon, or from the mistaken view of life which counts its value by the things possessed. It cannot be cured by the removal of the material need. That may relieve the care but cannot cure its cause. Religion's problem is the cure of anxiety.

III. The Cure of Care is Trust.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Secure in the Midst of Insecurity (150).

A flood; a pestilence; an earthquake, can turn affluence into destitution, competence into penury—all in a moment. When De Lesseps' steam shovels threw out the last clods of earth from the Suez Canal trench one thousand millions of dollars invested in warehouses, docks and general equipment by the English merchants engaged in the East India trade, was wiped out, and their equipment all consigned to the scrap heap. Last week the papers gave a picture of Pierpont Morgan and Porfirio Diaz, standing side by side, in Rome—old men in the eighties; their life-flames almost ready to flicker out— that of the former, since the first part of this sentence was written, has flickered out. And yet one of them was but recently the world's money-lord, and the other an all-powerful dictator with the lives of millions in his hands. "For we are all as grass."

"Change and decay in all around I see,
Oh, Thou that changest not, abide with me."

Dwelling in God; Abiding in Safety (151).

The transiency of the material needs no emphasis. "Change and decay in all around I see." We have only to return to the home of our childhood and look upon the broken circle of our friends; nay, to revisit a place after an absence of ten years gives us a startling revelation of the silent ravages of destructive time. It is certainly not in the material realm that we find the real and the permanent. Where shall we look for the real? Not again in human disposition. Even the noblest strains are fickle and broken. The songster is the victim of caprice, and has his silent moods. Discords afflict the harmony; sometimes the noblest music is like jangled bells, "out of tune and harsh." Where, then, shall we look for it? In "the love of God." There is nothing transitory about it, nothing fickle, nothing capricious, nothing shadowy, nothing unreal. God's love abides, the permanent background in the moving play. We cannot awake and find it absent; and while we sleep it never steals away. It is the most real thing in the universe. It never changes; and God loves thee. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."—J. H. Jowett, D.D.

Kept (152).

Kept by the Master's care; released from the strain of nagging worry, life will find abundant leisure for cultivating spiritual beauty. The atmosphere of trust provides genial sunshine in which love and joy and peace and all the noblest graces of the heart-like flourish.

Some time ago I spent an hour in a great conservatory when the air without was bleak and raw. In the soft, balmy atmosphere of that shelter, roses, chrysanthemums, carnations and their kind were blooming, glorious in coloring and shedding sweet perfumes. It was like a vision of Paradise as one came to it from the out-of-doors bleakness. And that bower of beauty was such simply because it was kept in the warmth and sunshine.

Our hurried, harried, troubled lives lose all possibility of beauty because we forget to live in the consciousness of Christ's love.

The Inner Circle (153).

It was only a little flock that truly belonged to Christ during the days of his incarnate ministry. Sometimes there were crowds that pressed upon him—multitudes who followed in his train to hear his wonderful words and see his amazing works; but those who had truly accepted him as their Lord and Master were only a small company. With what pathetic tenderness did he comfort and inspire them when he said to them, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Often since then in the shifting tides of the history of the Church of Christ there have been times when the number of the true children of the Kingdom has been small indeed. Have we not fallen upon such a day? Whatever may be said of great religious movements of this period and of the numbers of those who are sometimes found in the train of our divine Lord, yet how few are those to whom the Christ life is the supreme purpose and joy of living. Such are mainly found in little inner circles of the Church made up of those to whom holy living is more than all the world beside. The multitudes are taken up with and devoted to the absorbing and exciting and an-

pealing things of modern life with which the world is now ablaze. May the hour not be at hand when the true children of the Kingdom must be content to be a small body separate from the world? Has not the great outer court of the Church again become thronged with those who are intent alone on the joys and gains and triumphs of worldly life?—Northern Christian Advocate.

Cures Sickness and Sin (154).

Some years ago a lady went to consult a famous physician. She was a woman of nervous temperament, whose troubles had worried and excited her to such a pitch that the strain threatened her physical strength and even her reason. She gave the doctor her symptoms, only to be astonished at this brief prescription: "Madame, what you need is to read your Bible more."

"Go home and read your Bible an hour a day," the great man reiterated, with kindly authority. "Then come back to me a month from today." And he bowed her out without a possibility of further protest.

At first his patient was inclined to be angry. Then she reflected that, at least, the prescription was not an expensive one. Besides, it certainly had been a long time since she had read the Bible regularly. Worldly cares had crowded out prayer and Bible study for years, and though she would have resented being called an irreligious woman, she had undoubtedly become a most careless Christian. She went home and set herself conscientiously to try the physician's remedy.

In one month she went back to his office.

"Well," he said, smiling as he looked at her face, "I see you are an obedient patient, and have taken my prescription faithfully. Do you feel as if you needed any other medicine now?"

"No, doctor, I don't," she said honestly. "I feel like a different person. But how did you know that was just what I needed?"

For answer, the famous physician turned to his desk. There worn and marked, lay an open Bible.

"Madame," he said with deep earnestness, "if I were to omit my daily reading of this book, I should lose my greatest source of strength and skill. I never go to an operation without reading my Bible. I never attend a distressing case without finding help in its pages. Your case called not for medicine, but for sources of peace and strength outside your own mind, and I showed you my own prescription, and I knew it would cure."

"Yet I confess, doctor," said his patient, "that I came very near not taking it."

"Very few are willing to try it, I find," said the physician, smiling again. "But there are many, many cases in my practice where it would work wonders if they only would take it."

This is a true story. It will do no one any harm to try.—Selected.

Absorbed in God, Exempt From Harm (155).

In ascending the lofty peaks of the Jungfrau and Monte Rosa, the guides are said not infrequently to resort to the artifice of endeavoring to interest the traveler in the beauty of the lovely flowers growing there, with a view to distract his attention from the fearful abysses which the

giddy path overhangs. By a similar device of wisdom and love are the saints preserved as they pursue their perilous way. God establishes their steps by charming their eye with things of beauty, interest, and delectableness, and by filling their heart with the love of them. Home, with its pleasantness and pathos; the charm of literature, the miracles of science, the spell of music, the visions of art; the daily round, with its ever fresh solicitudes and satisfactions; the calls of patriotism, the demands of duty, the glow of love, the pleasures of friendship, social service, the abandon of pastimes—these, and many other similar things pertaining to the natural life, when accepted, exercised, and enjoyed in the sunshine of the Lord, constitute our strength and guarantee our peace, despite all the visions of sin, all the allurements of world, flesh, and devil. We are not saved by some unknown magic, but God draws our heart to himself through the sanctified gifts, situations, and activities which go to the making up of human life. Here is our impregnable defense. These are the guardian angels which bear us up in their hands, lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone; these the shining squadrons of our salvation. Absorbed by the chaste and lovely things of legitimate life, we become oblivious of the yawning depths, and are then most secure when most oblivious.—Watchman.

"Dwelling" Is Not Inactivity (156).

I have heard soldiers say that in a battle the hardest thing is not the final rush. In that wild moment a man forgets himself and is caught into a mad tumult of enthusiasm. The hardest thing is to stand quiet and wait, while the hail of the enemy's fire is whistling round—to wait in the darkness and in the face of death and be forbidden to return the fire. It is that which tries the nerves and tests the heart. It is that which shows the stuff that men are made of. In such an hour a man is not asleep—he is intensely and tremendously alive. And I mention that, to show how the word "waiting" does not describe a dull or sluggish state, but is compatible with ardent feelings, and with a spirit that is burning at its brightest.—George H. Morrison.

The Results of Abiding.

In the storms of life the heroic in man's character is developed. The storms and conflicts of life afford discipline. Men are brought closer together in the fellowship of suffering. Men come to know God in the storm, who never would have known him without it. Storm-winds sometimes beat into port. There is a story of a storm-beaten island, that was well nigh uninhabited and desolate because it had no harbor. A great tidal wave came sweeping over it one day, accompanied by an earthquake that tore a great gash in its coast, and the waters rushed in and filled the rent, and when the storm had subsided there was a beautiful, quiet, sun-kissed bay. The storm had given a harbor. Thus through a great sorrow, does God sometimes open a life for his own entrance.—The Congregationalist.

XVIII. THE GRATEFUL HEART.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."—Psalm 103:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Frederick F. Shannon in preaching on this theme, said, in part: The Bible is like a melodious steeple set with thanksgiving chimes. The variations of the tune are many, the spirit, the tune itself, is one. Harken to the music of these scriptural bells! They ring out gloriously and they ring out unceasingly as well. To whom shall our thanksgiving be offered? Unto God, our heavenly Father. Through whom shall it be made? Why, through our Lord Jesus Christ. What are the reasons for thanksgiving? Well, all our gifts are from God—our temporal benefits, our daily providences, our unfailing guidance, our immortal hopes. What are some of the forms of expressing gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift? Worship, prayer, offerings and praises. These are just a few of the thanksgiving chimes that ring in the Bible tower.

I. This American country of ours should make every heart throb with gratitude to Almighty God. Think of its natural resources! Think of its boundless plains! Its fertile valleys!

II. A second thing for which right-thinking people are thankful is the Church of the living God, which an apostle describes as the pillar and ground of the truth. It is well, now and then, to go back to fundamental things, to discover what are the foundations of ultimate reality. In his masterful work on "The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century," the author leads us back, century by century, to Plato and beyond. But the Church of God goes back beyond Plato.

III. The thankful heart includes, also, among its "all things," gratitude for the unhonored and unsung. Have you thought worthily of the quietly good and nobly great, of whom the noisy world takes little account? And have you thought of how much we depend upon these for the comforts, conveniences, and, indeed, the essentials of life in this world? There is the shoemaker. You never see his face on the billboards, but we could scarcely get along without the shoemaker. There is the newsboy. We accept his presence in city and town and village as a matter of fact. But how tame and dull life would be without him and his service! And what stories of heroism are constantly coming from the unostentatious world.

IV. Look about you, then, and within you, and beneath you, and above you, and you will be sure to find many things which will fit in with the liturgy of the thankful heart. Let us be thankful for the withheld, the unexplained, the unachieved. I saw a strong man kissing the cheek of his dead old father, venerable with years and wealthy with invisible gold. Turning away, the son said, "I wonder if father is not already young again, and if he has not lost even the memory of his terrible pain." Give your hearts to God, then, and he will take your hard questions, give you joy for sorrow, peace for pain, hope for despair.

and love that knows no measure. For all things are for your sakes—all true teachers, whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas; all wondrous school rooms, whether the world, or life, or death; all hopes and all experiences, whether things present, or things to come; all are yours, if you are Christ's, because Christ is God's and nothing shall be able to separate you from his love. Ring out your happy bells of gratitude, ring them clear across the world, ring them until their golden tones are heard in Heaven, and so may you cause this and all thanksgivings to abound unto the glory of God!

* * *

We do not understand that we are to give thanks for evil in itself, but we may offer praise for the overruling of it for good. Again, many things that we regard as misfortunes are blessings. Trials and crosses are often among the greatest blessings in disguise, for it is only through such disciplinary processes that the character is perfected. When we consider that the disagreeable is indispensable enrichment and strengthening of character, we see that we should offer thanks for this phase of experience, as well as for the agreeable. What a change would be wrought in our lives if we thus acted!

George Matheson, the well-known blind preacher of Scotland, who recently went to be with the Lord, says: "My God, I have never thanked Thee for my 'thorn.' I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but never once for my 'thorn,' I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my 'thorn.' Show me that I have climbed to thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made my rainbow."—Pittsburg Christian Advocate.

ILLUSTRATIVE TRUTHS AND INCIDENTS.

God the Fountain Source (157).

We ought to cultivate the habit of thanking God for everything, and in order to do this we ought to live by a philosophy of God's government which would enable us to conceive of him as the constant fountain of life and joy and strength. There is a school of Moslem thought, as Dr. Duncan Black Macdonald says in his "Aspects of Islam," "which regards the world and all the events in the world as a perpetual miracle—a miracle always and constantly going on. It is not only that, by a creative miracle, the world was brought into existence; it is not only that, by an overseeing Providence, the world is maintained in existence; but all through the existence of the world—from moment to moment—there is this miraculous creation going on. What happens, from this point of view, when, for example, I lift this book? It is quite a complicated thing that happens, an involved process. There are a great many creations by Allah during that process. First of all, the book is lying there. From moment to moment as it lies it is being created, or, at least, retained in existence by the direct, personal working of Allah. When I lift it, as I do now, what happens? He has created in me the movement of my hand, and he has created in the book—you cannot say a movement, but rather, a series of books, as it goes up on its way until it lands

here. You see, we have in this scheme not only an atomic system of matter; we have also, and this is the most curious device of the Moslem metaphysicians, an atomic system for time."

This is error. God's method is not such a mechanical and arbitrary method as this. He is in the world as well as above the world. But we are poor Christians if we allow Mohammedan orthodoxy or Mohammedan heresy to give men a more vivid sense of their dependence upon God than we have. And if we are absolutely and actually and always dependent upon God, we ought to be unceasingly grateful to him for all his goodness and our gratitude ought to be spoken. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."—J. R. Miller, D. D.

The Memory of the Heart (158).

At an exhibition of deaf mutes in the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, the high class were asked to define "gratitude." One of the pupils, a beautiful girl, wrote on the slate, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart." Yet how many have the remembrance of the blessing without the feeling of gratitude for it?

Fresh Every Morning (159).

Gratitude is taught only in that school of faith which declares that God is so good and so great that he starts every day along its own new path bringing to us new material blessings, letting us look into new faces, revealing to us new phases of truth, opening up to us new regions of character, and putting before us new opportunities for work. Under this view of the divine care even the Book of Lamentations ceases its wailing and says of the Lord's mercies, "They are new every morning." Instead of monotony we see variety; instead of occasional benefit the constancy of mercy; instead of heartless machinery, the hand of the loving God.—Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes.

Gratitude to Helpful Friend (160). Dickens never forgot how old John Black, the publisher, was the first to help him in the world of letters. "It was John Black that flung the slipper after me," he would say. "Dear old Black, my first hearty out-and-out appreciator."

Gratitude a Stimulus (161).

Sincere thankfulness is declared to be a magnificent stimulant. The apostle Paul warns his readers against turning to material stimulants in conditions of depression and gloom. I think he is not referring merely to mental and moral weariness, but also to physical tiredness and exhaustion. He advises people who are spent in body, mind or soul to turn to the ministries of the spirit, and particularly he mentions "giving thanks always for all things." It is a counsel which is much ignored. If thankfulness exhilarates the soul, what about all the murmuring and complaining in which our common life abounds? Every moody complaint adds to the burden we carry; every word of thanks lightens our daily load. There is no exhilarant like praise, and thankful people always carry a shining face.

Thankfulness is also declared to be a magnificent preservative of the sacredness of our possessions. There is a certain stimulus in striving for a thing; there is a certain hopeful aspiration after things we have not yet found. But a thing hoped for can act like a

drug once we possess it. It may dull the very senses that were wide awake to possess it. When we acquire a thing our spiritual perceptions may go to sleep, and we may lose the sense of its sacred value. There is no awe upon its possession. It becomes common and commonplace. Now thankfulness retains a sense of the sacredness of things. The commonplace wears a nimbus. There is a halo upon the ordinary. A mystic fire burns in the wayside bush. God is seen in the lowly shrine. The common meal becomes a sacrament. To say "thank you," and mean it, keeps the soul awake to the divine.—Selected.

"I'm Thankful For You" (162).

This was the sweet, consoling word that came to a woman struggling with fresh bereavement at the Thanksgiving season. Instantly a well of thankfulness was unsealed in her own heart. All was not over, then! There was still something left to live for. Someone yet leaned on her. Someone turned to her for help and strength and comfort. It set a whole nest of singing birds caroling in the very ruins of her own happiness.

Does not this give us a hint how to comfort the sorrowful? "I don't want to be 'poor-deared'!" cried one whose best-beloved had been taken. "All I want on earth is just once more to hear him say, 'I need you.'" That comfort, alas! was nevermore to be hers, but time showed her a helpless worldful of people always saying it. It is the true soul-tonic. The solace of helping others is within the reach of every sufferer. Added to that is sometimes vouchsafed the reward hinted at in the beginning of this paragraph. Now and then someone will feel a warm throb of thankfulness toward us, and say so. It pays a thousand times for the little we are able to do out of our weakness. Nobody wants to have anybody thankful to him, but it is a high form of happiness to know that someone is thankful for us.—Congregationalist.

Gifts Overlooked (163).

The goodness of God recognized by us is by far the least part of it, Dr. Watkinson reminds us. There is the goodness that we overlook. God's gifts are multiplied like the dew-drops or the snowflakes, and, gliding into life just as silently, are easily undiscerned by careless eyes like ours. One day in the town of Sonora, in the southern mines of California, after a very heavy rain and freshet, a man was leading his mule-cart up the steep principal street, when his foot struck upon a large stone; he stooped down to remove it, and found it was a solid lump of gold, about twenty-five pounds weight, which had been exposed by the storm, and many hundreds of people has passed over it daily. So do we daily blindly trample on blessings richer than all the wealth of California. And there is the goodness we misconstrue. We count sublime things commonplace, and reckon as losses and disappointments the discipline which brings incorruptible treasure. The "benefits" of God are not the pleasant things merely but the things of pain and tears. —Selected.

God the Giver (164).

A boy was bringing home a loaf of bread, and one said, "What have you there?" "A loaf." "Where did you get it?" "From the baker."

"Where did the baker get it?" "He made it." "Of what did he make it?" "Flour." "Where did he get the flour?" "From the miller." "Where did he get it?" "From the farmer." "Where did the farmer get it?" Then the truth dawned upon the boy's mind, and he replied, "From God." "Well, then, from whom did you get the loaf?" "O, from God." Here is a boy who, in the last resort, acknowledges God to be the giver of good. In this materialistic age, a man says, "My business supports me and my family." It is a lie; God supports you and your family. Men deal with God only as a last resort, and yet go on hoping to sneak into God's heaven when they have done with his world; but the God of Sinai is thundering out to this age, "Thou shalt put me first and the baker second." We may not sacrifice to the net, nor may we burn incense to the drag.

"Benefits" Itemized (165).

Here is the summary of one saint who had learned to count his blessings: "I thank God for Christian parents whose solicitude and prayers have followed me every day of my life, have succored me in the hour of temptation and strengthened me for life's responsibilities, and have been a constant buoyancy to my soul when the fire has burned low.

"I thank God for the spark of divinity in my soul that teaches me that I was not made for meanness, and constantly urges me upward toward God.

"I thank God for a spirit of human sympathy which brings me into touch with the great throbbing heart of humanity and will not let me live a wholly selfish life.

"I thank God for good men and women, whose pure lives are a perpetual rebuke to my imperfections and make me believe in a possibility of my achieving personal goodness.

"I thank God for the great Friend whose abiding presence grows ever sweeter to me, and who forgives my sins and believes in me when others do not and I despair of myself.

"I thank God for his Church and for a place in it in which to work and for a disposition to work.

"I thank God for faith in him and in his Son, the world's Redeemer.

"I thank God for faith in men and women, for a disposition to believe in their goodness, to be sorry for their faults, to forgive their wrongs, and to wish them ever the greatest happiness attainable in this life and everlasting bliss and happiness in the world to come.

"I thank God for enough sorrow to keep my heart tender and to make me sympathize with all others who sorrow."—Selected.

The Thankful Heart (166).

Beecher said: "The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so will it find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold." And Dr. Hall wrote: "Learn the lesson of thanksgiving. It is due to God, it is due to ourselves. Thanksgiving for the past makes us trustful in the present and hopeful for the future. What he has done is the pledge of what he will do."

XIX. THE MEANING OF DISASTER.

"Again they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow."—Psalm 107:39.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. Dire disaster is not to be interpreted, locally, in terms of Divine displeasure.

Ever since the Flood and Sodom men have been inclined to look upon other people's calamities as dispensations of judgment, specific penalties meted out to them because they were sinners above others. Christ's very definite and very stinging rebuke should have been sufficient to have placed a final quietus upon all this holier-than-thou spirit. No doubt, if you considered the flagrant wickedness of their slums and the worldliness of their nominal Christians, the special communities more particularly visited by signal calamities have been evil enough. And no doubt, if you measure their sinning over against God's long suffering mercy, they deserved to be wiped off the face of the earth. But then, what city, village, crossroads, does not deserve that fate? Comparatively speaking, the desert of all is the same. And it is presumptuous self-righteousness for any man, in the case of any particular calamity, to interpret it as a special evidence of God's wrath called forth by the special locality, or individual, concerned. Let God do that.

II. Nor is dire disaster to be thought of, for a moment, as the slightest reflection upon the goodness of God.

There is, undoubtedly, a margin of the absolutely unpreventable. There are possibilities of calamity wholly beyond human control. Man cannot master the cyclone—although, even here, so simple a device as the cyclone cellar has often reduced the loss of life resulting to the minimum.

But, after all, we cannot evade the fact that a very large proportion of the worst results of the world's historic disasters were preventable. Cleveland lost several millions of dollars through the recent flood largely because it had failed to straighten out the windings of the Cuyahoga River through its "flats," and deepen its channel by dredging. This will now be done at once. It is asserted by the Mayor of Dayton that the deep dredging of the Miami River which he has been urging upon the city council, would have averted much of the loss.

Many Ohio River cities deliberately invite property destruction by rearing warehouses and business blocks, as well as homes, below what is definitely known to be highwater mark. Since Philadelphia has stopped drinking unfiltered, bacilli-laden Schuylkill water typhoid epidemics are unknown there. The dwellers on the vineclad slopes of Mt. Vesuvius flock back to their death-inviting terraces before the lava of the last eruption has cooled. The Japanese committee of experts, sent to investigate the San Francisco earthquake, reported by Dr. Nakamura, Professor of Architecture at Tokyo University, that "dishonest mortar—a corrupt conglomeration of sea-sand and lime—was responsible for nearly all of the earthquake damage in San Francisco." It is not fair

to blame God for our own disregard of danger; or because we are willing to take the chances which are linked up with certain localities and natural conditions. It is not piety, but something very different, to charge up the results flowing from our disregard of preventative precautions, to mysterious providential dispensations.

To let disaster disturb faith, or lead us to impugn God's goodness, is not merely sinful but silly.

III. There is sunshine behind the clouds. One touch of nature, in the form of sympathy-arousing disaster, sweeps away, in a moment, all the barriers of conventionality and everyday mutual indifferences to others' weal or woe.

The whole country has responded, in fervent sympathy, and promptly volunteered assistance, and lavish giving, to the pitiful calls of need. Rich and poor have joined in generous donations to the relief funds being gathered. The names of Cleveland's millionaires and its too often despised, ditch-digging dagoes, stood side by side in the published lists of eager contributors to the fund. "We be brethren"—even if we do sometimes forget the fact.

IV. There's one more reflection from which we cannot get away, if we would:—the mutability of all these earthly things which, when the sun shines, seem so transcendently important and immovably permanent, and so secure.—Tremont.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Wreck of the Titanic (167).

Surrounded by the familiar sights and sounds of the cities we have built, within the cheery hail of our fellows at every turn, we are tempted to believe that independence and good fortune make us an exception to reverses. But when men slide down into those giant and slippery arms which can with ease embrace and crush the populations and the dwelling places of this planet, then frail humans realize how insignificant and abject is their presence here. We can tunnel the mountains, divert the rivers, drain the marshes and rear on the shores stalwart towers and graceful pinnacles. Such deeds are native to our habit as the creatures of the land. But men have never left a mark on the elusive element of the ocean where they are but fleeting specks. The elastic pavements seduce us to evade us. Their levels are entirely governed by their own tides and motions. Their restless surfaces are in a constant flux and what is, again is not; and what is not, suddenly appears. The tranquil calm of their unmeasured resources bears no fear of man and owes him no allegiance. He sails in warm belts of tropical exuberance, where every ripple whispers peace. He forces a hazardous entrance through the frozen barriers of those ghostly palaces of unbroken winter whose fatal bergs float out and lie in dark and deadly silence on his chartered route. He quivers before the storm fiend's anarchies, whose hell of turbulence howls and hisses in endless torture and curls its liquid jaws around the doomed. He finds in these wide diversities the full epitome of nature's sweetest and most grand and awful moods. They baffle him—here so enticing, there so imperious, from the caress of the crystal wavelet on a golden strand to the caverns of leaping chaos

whose thunders announce eternity. Surely God alone is great, and the symphony of that greatness is heard nowhere on earth save in the music of the sea.—Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, D.D.

The Ohio and Indiana Floods of 1913 (168).

Where was God while all this was happening? What was he doing? How was he feeling? Who, at such times, can repress such questions as these? What a terrible world it is in which such things are allowed to happen! What awful unsuspected dangers lurk in the hiding-places of nature! It almost seems as if those very elements on which man has relied for sustenance and comfort were capable at any moment of turning upon him and rending. Here is water, that great essential of the life of man. For even a few drops his parched throat has often panted. In some form or other it has brought untold blessings into his life. And here is the wind, that has again and again cooled his fevered brow, that has wafted his ships freighted with their rich cargoes to the desired havens. But suddenly the hitherto beneficent elements descend upon him in wrath and ravage him as a lion sports with and mangles its prey.

But does it make our life in this strange and captious world any more endurable to think of these tremendous forces as altogether beyond the control of God? The only thing that keeps men sane in the midst of such awful tragedies is the thought of God and of the future life. With no power or intelligence higher than ours at work in the universe, with no life beyond this to fill out what is often so ruthlessly ended here, this world would be indeed a desolate prison-house and the struggle to exist would be the mad fight of animals caught in a cage. Long ago a man who lived near to God wrote these words, "He maketh his wind to blow and the waters flow." The winds and the waters which raged so furiously and destructively were not let loose by demons who had temporarily usurped the seat of power and authority in this universe.

Hope on, then, fainting hearts. Find the same source of quiet confidence which the Psalmist discovered. Rest in the witness of our Lord Jesus Christ to the goodness and mercy of God. See in the resolute spirit with which men are already entering upon the stupendous task of recovery and restoration, an evidence that there is something in man which defies and rises above catastrophe. See in the quick and universal outpouring of sympathy and succor the evidence that stronger than any force of nature is man's love for his fellowman. And be sure that God is better and wiser than any man and that he never relaxes for a single moment his hold upon the world he has made.—The Congregationalist.

Human Responsibility for Many Disasters (169).

We do not narrow down God's immanence and providence, we enlarge their scope and magnify their grandeur, as well as the dignity of him whom God placed only a little lower than the angels in creation's scale.

It is vastly better to be qualified for doing needful things for ourselves than to be pampered and enfeebled by having them done for us. It is not mocking the petitioner, but revealing to him his nobler place, to tell him that God commissions him to answer many of his own prayers.

It is folly to speed an ocean liner on its way with prayers and then run it at the rate of twenty-one knots an hour through an iceberg infested sea at night; or to fail to adequately equip it with lifeboats. It is the same kind of folly that sought to banish yellow fever germs from Cuba by holding sacred processions through the streets when the plague threatened, instead of destroying the mosquitoes in the swamps. There is no strange providence about a yellow fever epidemic. It is merely the natural result of ignorance of or indifference to sanitary precautions. There was nothing "providential"—in this perverted use of that word—in the raging Johnstown flood, it was the direct sequence of a reckless defiance of very clearly written natural laws.

We all disclaim superstition and yet most of us have a streak of it lurking somewhere in the nooks and crannies of our brains. And in this same way, most of us are tempted to say kismet at some point when ordinary regard for divinely fixed conditions would enable us easily to surmount the supposedly insurmountable and conquer circumstances. Let us learn to trust our heavenly Father with all the unquestioningness of little children.

But let us also learn to utilize the principles and laws of action which he has graciously placed at our disposal. And if through negligence or culpable ignorance, or tempted by another unworthy motive, we go contrary to a divinely taught common sense, whatever else we do, when human folly has brought down disaster, let us refrain from charging the result to God's inscrutable purposes.—Selected.

God in the Storm (170).

When mists begin to settle upon us and our surroundings seem unfamiliar, and we are in danger of losing our way, it is good to get the eye fixed upon some familiar object in the landscape that will serve as a landmark. Thus God has given to us certain distinguishing and determining facts which serve as spiritual landmarks. It is by retaining our hold upon these that we keep ourselves in the way. Thus are we enabled to live up to the creed, "All that we know of God's goodness teaches us to trust him for all that we do not know." Here are some of the landmarks: The possibility of evil is the price paid for development. If God governs, it must be by law. If that law is broken, the penalty must be paid. But the fault is not in the law. Back of the law, the penalty, the storm, the stress, the flood, is God; and God is Love. Therefore, in the very midst of the mystery there is always a Friendly Presence. God is in the storm and in the flood, not as the author of evil, but as the author of the punishment of the evil. The triumph of evil is only a seeming triumph. It is one thing to be storm-tossed, and an entirely different thing to be lost. If our Pilot is on board, no water can swallow the ship.—United Presbyterian.

Earth's Gethsemanes (171).

Wherever we look we face Gethsemane. Who reconciles this problem to the belief in a God, both loving and omnipotent?

Science can give no answer. It finds nature endowed with tooth and talon, fang and claws. Says Victor Hugo: "A piece of silk stolen from the palace of the Emperor of China, represents a shark eating a

crocodile, who is eating a serpent, who is devouring an eagle, who is preying on a swallow, who in turn is eating a caterpillar. All Nature is thus alternately devouring and devoured. The prey, prey upon each other." Despairing to solve the problem, he exclaims: "Let us aspire to an existence in which these mysteries shall be made clear!"

Philosophy has argued that the devourers are the sextons of the system of nature, and that universal death means universal burial. It has grasped the truth that, if the tomb were unknown, love probably would never have flourished in a world of selfishness. It is certain that the art of appreciation is created by the contrast of light and shadow and would be impossible, were it not for the danger of loss. It agrees with Dr. Rexford's eloquent plea: "A diadem made of the celestial jewels by the combined skill of all the angels in heaven could not compare with that crown which the human being himself shall create by his own heroic and persistent determination to wrest victory from defeat, success from failure—the determination to pluck the truth out of its mysterious disguises and at last to think God's thoughts after him." But after all has been said, the problem remains. It is night in Gethsemane.—Bard.

Ways of Explaining Trouble.

In all ages and climes poets and philosophers have sought out an explanation of the problem of human suffering. Why did not God make a world without sin? Why need there be any winter and frosts? Why should there be cyclones and floods? Why was San Francisco's earthquake necessary? Would not happiness uninterrupted have been better? The old paganism had its answer: There is a God, but from time to time, here and there, a storm, a flood or a fire gets out of his hand. Then for a little time the world is a runaway orb and trouble goes rioting through life, working devastation upon every side. Later, little by little, Ormuzd, the God of Good, recovers his strength and subdues evil. This philosophy explains trouble by the temporary loss of Omnipotence. The New Epicureanism presents its plan; there is much trouble in the world, and death will come at last to all, but fortunately there is also much good. There are sweet wines, choice foods, soft raiment, perfumes, music and luxury; therefore get all you can, keep all you can, eat and drink, for tomorrow you die. The world is a treasure house, and each pilgrim does well to loot and carry away all the treasure he can stagger under. The New Stoicism goes to the other extreme; suffering is a misery; troubles are universal; no wall can be built to keep out the rising flood of disaster. Therefore, shut your teeth, clinch your fist, harden your heart, and let trouble do its worst. But this is a poor philosophy. The tiled roof is not disturbed by rain or the slate by snow, nor is the thick tortoise troubled by the pelting storm, but that which is good in a tortoise is bad in a man. Life means sensitiveness. The petrified feeling means the dead heart. The agnostic becomes at once cynical and bitter. The storms crush man, the cold chills him, the acids eat, the steam scalds, the famines waste his strength, the swamps exhale a poison deadlier than that of the Borgias, soon or late disease will slay every individual. No one can escape, therefore, accept the inevitable. Last of all comes the philosophy of

Jesus, as interpreted by Paul. God loves, but whom he loves he chastens. With smiles Paul says: "My light afflictions, which are but for the moment—blows, scourges, stones, mobs, dungeon, poison, a day and a night in the sea, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils among false brethren, hunger, cold, nakedness": mere trifles these, Paul thinks—these work out a far more "exceeding and eternal weight of glory." As a loving Father, God decided to introduce trouble and suffering into the world as a method of making manhood. He uses the night with the day, winter with summer, storm with sunshine, struggle with serenity, poverty and abundance, sorrow and joy, tears and smiles, but all these things are to be so used as to work together for good for those who love God. And nothing shall be able to separate man from this love of God manifested in Christ. Therefore, Paul wore scars and gashes as insignia of royalty and exulted in his tribulations, rising against opposing troubles as birds rise and are lifted by the very wind they breast.—Newell Dwight Hillis, D.D.

XX. OUR OMNIPOTENT HELPER.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, etc."—Psalm 121.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Phillips Brooks, in unfolding the riches of these verses, handled the passage in the following way:

In these words of the Psalmist the nobleness which we immediately feel seems to lie in this, that David will seek help only from the highest source. Nothing less than God's help can really meet his needs. He will not peer into the valleys, he will not turn to fellowmen, to nature, to work, to pleasure, as if they had the relief he needed. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth." It is the duty of every man to seek help from the Highest in every department of his life.

1. Take, first, the everlasting struggle with temptation. How perfectly clear it is that any man who undertakes that struggle may look either to the valleys or to the hills for help, may call the lower or the higher powers to his aid. The fear of pain, the fear of disgrace, the fear of discomfort, and the shame that comes with the loftiest companionship —we may have to appeal to them all in the hours, which come so often in our lives, when we are very weak. But, after all, the appeal to these helpers is not the final cry of the soul. Obedience to God is the only final and infallible help of the soul in its struggle with temptation.

II. Not merely in temptation, but in sorrow, a man may seek the assistance of the Highest or of some other power which is far lower. The real relief, the only final comfort, is God; and he relieves the soul always in its suffering, not from its suffering; nay, he relieves the soul by its suffering, by the new knowledge and possession of himself which would come only through that atmosphere of pain.

III. Our truth is nowhere more true than in the region of doubt and perplexity of mind.

IV. The text is true with reference to man's escape from sin. The best spiritual ambition seeks directly holiness. It seeks pardon as a means to holiness. So it lifts its eyes up at once to the very highest hills.

* * *

Rev. George Barton divides this text as follows:

1. The soul is often placed in circumstances of distress. 2. In time of distress Jehovah is an ever available refuge; a, his power is unbounded; b, his defense is invincible; c, his vigilance is unwearied; 3, the most signal manifestations of Divine help are realized in the sanctuary. The temple stood on those "hills" to which the Psalmist lifted up his eyes; 4, The soul is delivered from its distress only as it turns to Jehovah.

* * *

We are encouraged to look to God for deliverance from life's corroding cares. These are of different kinds. Dr. F. B. Meyer says:

I. There is care about our growth in grace. It is very unreasonable; and yet how common! We fret because we fear that we are not getting on fast enough, and run to and fro in our anxiety to pick up something from other people. As well might a lad in an infant class fret because he may not enter the higher classes of the school. But surely his one business is to acquire the lessons set before him by the teacher. When those are learned, it will be for the teacher to give him other and harder ones, and to advance him to positions where quicker progress may be made. And it is for us to learn each day the lessons which the Lord Jesus sets us, and to leave to him the responsibility of leading us forward in the knowledge and love of God.

II. There is care about our Christian work. How to maintain our congregations? How to hold our own amid the competition of neighboring workers? How to maintain the efficiency and vigor of our machinery? How to adjust differences between our fellow or subordinate workers? How to find material enough to supply the incessant demand for sermons and addresses? How to shepherd a large flock of souls? What elements of care are hidden in each of these! And in what numberless cases the look of weary anxiety betrays the heartache within!

But one is inclined to ask sometimes, Whose work is it? If it is yours, resting on your shoulders only, there may be some reasonableness in the carrying of care. But if, as is surely the case, the work is your Master's, the burden should be his also. The prime worker is not you, but Christ. He is working through you. You are but his servant. All that you are responsible for is to do what he bids to the uttermost of your power; and he must bear all the cost and responsibility beside. If things are not going smoothly, go and tell him, and cast all the anxiety of it back on him, leaving it to him to extricate or reinforce you.

III. There is care about the ebb and flow of feeling. Our feelings are very changeable. They are affected by changes in the weather and temperature, by the state of our digestion and liver, by over-weariness, by want of sleep, by a thousand nameless causes. No stringed instrument is more affected by minute changes than we are; and we are apt to worry when the tide of emotion is running fast out, defying our efforts to retain it. But, if we are not conscious of any sin or negligence to which this subsidence of emotion may be attributed, we may cast the care of such an experience on our Saviour. He knows our frame; and, as we pass down the dark staircase, let us hold fast to the hand-rail of his will, willing still to do his will, though in the dark. "I am as much thine, and devoted to thee, in the depths of my being now, as when my heart was happiest in thy love."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Human Fickleness and Divine Stability (172).

I remember so well Hudson Taylor coming to my church. He stepped on the platform and opened the Bible to give an address, and said, "Friends, I will give you the motto of my life," and he turned to Mark 11:22: "Have faith in God." The margin says: "Have the faith of God," but Hudson Taylor said it meant, "Reckon on God's faith to you." He continued: "All my life has been so fickle. Sometimes I could trust

sometimes I could not, but when I could not trust then I reckoned that God would be faithful."—F. B. Meyer.

Lifting Our Eyes to Heaven in Trouble (173).

In the early days of Britain, when the Christian Cuthbert and his companions were driven from the bitter land to sea, and then were cast upon a dreary shore by a terrible storm, they cried, "No path is open for us; let us perish: we are driven from land to sea and from sea to land." And Cuthbert answered, "Have ye so little faith, my comrades?" and then lifting his eyes to heaven he prayed, "I thank thee, Lord, that the way to heaven is still open." When there is no other way to look for help, we may look up.—The Classmate.

Let God Help You (174). Said a good physician quaintly to an over-anxious mother as she bent over her sick child, "What makes you think you must do it all yourself? Why don't you give Providence a chance to help you?" I think he struck upon the root of the trouble.—The Young Women of India.

Forgetting Our Resources (175).

A little street girl was taken sick one Christmas, and carried to the hospital. While there she heard the story of Jesus' coming into the world to save us. One day the nurse came around at the usual hour, and "Little Broomstick" (that was her street name) held her by the hand and whispered, "I am having real good times here, ever such good times! S'pose I'll have to go 'way from here just as soon as I get well; but I'll take the good time along—some of it, anyhow. Did you know about Jesus being born?"

"Yes," replied the nurse, "I know. But you must not talk any more."

"You did? I thought you looked as if you didn't, and I was going to tell you."

"Why, how did I look?" asked the nurse, forgetting her orders in her curiosity.

"Oh, just like most o' folks—kind o' glum. I shouldn't think you'd ever look glum if you knowed about Jesus bein' born."—Christian Evangelist.

Turning Our Faces Toward God (176).

Where shall we look for hope and help in our hours of gloom and days of despair? How shall we confront the supreme and terrible moral and spiritual tragedies of the soul?

What did the saints and heroes do? What did the men and women of history do—the men and women we admire? What did Martin Luther do? What did Lincoln do? What did Jesus do? Did they surrender to the world's grief and assaults? Did they seek deliverance in flight? Did they sit down among the ruins of their hopes and long to escape from their unhappy lots and heavy crosses to some lovely and serene asylum of peace?

Perhaps—for they were human—transient impulses to surrender or to escape often visited their perplexed minds. But they did not yield to these sirens of the soul. If they had yielded, their lives and deeds and words would not inspire us, as they now do, with the moral passion

to face, as they did, the hardest and bitterest situations and experiences, and to conquer them and to rise above them into the strength and glory of victory and the joy of spiritual achievement. To him that overcometh the laurel that fadeth not away is promised, and the crown of Christ.

Soon or late the swiftly moving years of life bring most human souls face to face with conditions or circumstances—domestic, financial, moral, spiritual—when no one can help us but ourselves. We may be blessed with wise and kind and sympathetic friends, but in the end no one can meet these supreme trials for us. Ultimately, sometime and somewhere, the silent but divine necessity confronts us, and we are challenged. What shall we do? There is only one thing for the human soul to do. It is to rise up and gird on the sword and go forth to battle. Any other course is beneath the dignity of man.

No, as Browning sings, when a man begins the fight with himself, and turns his face toward God and toward the light, struggling to overcome whatever threatens to crush out his faith and courage of his manhood, then he is worth something to himself, to humanity and to God.—Rev. Frank L. Phalen.

The Changeless Christ (177). For men soon change and quickly fail; but Christ remaineth forever and standeth by us firmly to the end.—Thomas a Kempis.

A Very Present Help (178).

The Hebrew, Greek and Roman thought conceived of God as a force outside of the world. The modern conception of God regards him as the indwelling life of his creation. Carlyle's definition of the old theology is explicit. "An absent God outside of the world watching it go." This was the thought of Dante in his "Divine Comedy." It was the thought of Bunyan in his "Pilgrim's Progress." It was the thought of Milton in his "Paradise Lost." In all these masterpieces of the human mind God is on the outside of the circle of humanity. To Milton, to Dante and to Bunyan, God was not love. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, men saw a new vision and were guided by it. It was the vision their Master saw when hanging upon the cross. These men wrote their interpretation of God. They said if God is love, he is in the world and in humanity. In the book of Revelation they saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. They saw God coming to live upon the plains and dwell in the valleys among men. They believed that God was to build his city upon the earth and make it the home of his children, and that if he has some mansions in heaven he has other mansions on the earth. Epicurus was wrong. Plato was mistaken. So were the agnostics. The great central truth of the Christian religion and of human life is this, God is love. He is not only a creator and moral judge, but he is the friend and counselor of humanity, an ever present help in time of trouble.

Humanity seems like a poor pitiful thing beset on every side by forces superior and stronger. These things over which we have but little control hold us in the hollow of their remorseless hands. Sorrow breaks our hearts. Sin cripples and fetters us. Our paths are full of

stumbling blocks, yet there is something in man greater than them all. Man in the grasp of law, man eating the bread of sorrow, man paying the penalty of sin, and yet man, in spite of his pain, weakness and sin, cries out to something above, and by that cry he identifies himself with God. It is like a child being carried to sea by the outgoing tide reaching its little hands across the waves back to its father, who is standing on the shore, and the father is all love and he puts his love into a programme to save the child. Homer hung ideals like so many stars in the sky of the Athenian youth, but not until the young Greek pulled those ideals down and put them into the life, thought and institutions of his own nation did Greece feel the mighty impulse and inspiration of Homer's life. Jesus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, was beautiful, but when he came down to the valleys and plains ministering to the wants and needs of the people he was more beautiful. And so when God comes down from the shining courts above and walks along the highways below as man's friend and helper, he becomes our Father in fact, as well as in name. This conception of God is giving a mighty impulse to mankind which will in time reconstruct the institutions of humanity, alter the geography of the nations and change the structure of the world. and the essence of this conception is, God is love.—Rev. U. G. Warren, D.D.

Our Divine Helper (179).

Who does not know how day differs from day, even in a life of fairly even tenor? Who does not feel the differences of the day's surfaces and see the varieties of these colors? From the golden sunlight of a day of joy to the blackness of a day of woe, through all gradations, the scale runs as we journey on. From the grass of the meadow to the miry clay of the marsh, to the hot dust of the level road, to the flints of the steep ascent, to the waters of the cold river, varies the surface. And the great Companion knows it all. And he breaks up the great promise of the Presence to adjust it to every detail of our need. "I am with you, all the days and all day long even unto the end."—H. C. G. Moule.

Our Refuge in Trouble (180).

An old colored woman once went to a Christian who was very ill with fever and much depressed in spirit, and said: "Massa, does yo' see the bright side dis mornin'?" "No, Nanny," said I, "it isn't so bright as I wish it." "Well, massa, I allus see de bright side." "You do," said I; "maybe you haven't had much trouble." "Maybe not," she said; and then went on to tell me in her simple, broken way of her life in Virginia, of the selling of her children one by one, of the auction sale of her husband, and then of herself. She was alone now in camp, without having heard from one of her kindred for years. "Maybe I ain't seen no trouble, massa." "But, Nanny," said I, "have you seen the bright side all the time?" "Allus, massa, allus." "Well, how did you do it?" "Dis is the way, massa, When I see de brack cloud comin' over"—and she waved her dark hand inside the tent, as though one might be settling down there—"an' 'pears like it's comin' crushin' down on me, den I jist whips aroun' on de oder side, an' I find de Lord Jesus dar, and den it's

all bright and cl'ar. De bright side's allus where Jesus is."—The Christian Advocate.

Our Unseen Ally (181).

The men of the world take stock of material resources. They number the men and the machines, the weapons and the wealth, and all the visible helps on which they can rely. They count heads; they measure masses; they ask the size of the majority, and if they have all these things with them, they feel that they are on the winning side. But turn to the men of the Bible and you find all that reversed. There is little account taken of numbers and masses; huge figures are treated as ciphers, a grain of faith outweighs the resources of a kingdom. All the heroic men whose deeds are recorded there speak one language about these things—the language of assured confidence and quiet disdain. They fling scorn upon the weapons of flesh and rely upon invisible armor and defense. We see them alone, unsupported, unarmed, threatened and opposed by innumerable foes, yet undismayed and as serenely strong as if all the legions of heaven were waiting at their bidding. Moses defying the might of Egypt; Gideon with his little regiment charging the vast array of Midianites; Jonathan with a single companion attacking an army of Philistines; Elijah in solitary grandeur confronting the furious rabble of Baal's prophets; Daniel setting at nought the king, princes, and nobles of Babylon; John the Baptist sternly rebuking that incestuous Herod whom all men feared and flattered; Peter and John continuing their witness in defiance of the magistrates; Stephen standing firm before the mob that stoned him; Paul on Mars' Hill preaching of the Resurrection to a sceptical and mocking crowd; and above all, Jesus in the garden and on the cross forsaken of all men, yet confident that he would overcome, and draw all men to him.

These are all magnificent figures. They show us man made superhuman. They are pictures of courage, sublime resolution and quenchless hope, which have all the color of romance on a background of solid fact and truth. Unseen things were a mighty realty to these men, whatever they may be to us. The forces on which they leaned not only scattered their fears, but inspired them with an extraordinary cheerfulness. They never show the downcast look of men engaged in a losing cause. They have their depressions, but they are only the moods of an hour. Victory is written on their faces. There is the tone of triumph in their voices. They stand upon firm rock amid the heaving waves of human rage and sin, declaring "None of these things move me." For they know that certain irresistible and everlasting forces are working for them. God's will and unchanging purpose are on their side, and only the fickle whims and passions of men against them. Omnipotence is their servant, time, eternity, truth and right are their allies; and all the greatest things present and to come are working together for their ultimate success.—Rev. J. J. Greenhough.

XXI. THE WRECK OF A SOUL.

"But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul."—Proverbs 8:36.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. There is no question concerning sin being wrong done against God. Nor is there any question as to its being wrong done our fellow man.

II. But this verse points out the fact which the sinner is so apt to overlook at least at the time of committing the sin—sin is a wrong done against the sinner himself.

III. 1. It means the undermining of the spiritual nature.

2. It means the loss of all the virtues and graces of character which make life worth while.

3. It means the deprivation to the soul of Christ's sustaining power amid the conflicts of life.

4. It means the forfeiture of the eternal blessings won for the soul by Christ.

The Sinner Sells His Soul Into Bondage.

Sold under sin; a slave; once God's pure child, chosen for holiness and happiness; now bound by fetters which neither remorse nor effort of the will can break; carried away captive by a force impossible to resist. This is the story of Israel's sin. This is the story of sin cherished and yielded to in the individual soul. Sin is to be feared. We dare not treat it lightly. It must be acknowledged as a real enemy to be met and conquered or it will become our conqueror. One verse tells the whole story. "The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God." One of their prophets said, "They do these things in the dark, every one in the chambers of his imagery"—that is, in his own thoughts, in his secret heart; for they say, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth. God hath forgotten, he will never see it."

I. The loss of the sense of God is the first thread in the coil of sin.

"Thou who treadest on enchanted ground,
Perils and snares beset thee round;
Beware of all; guard every part,
But most, the traitor in thine heart."

"Once there came a timid knock at my heart's door. I took no heed at first. Again it came a little louder. I opened the door and there stood a tiny creature with the face of an angel. 'Let me in,' he said; 'I will give you a good time.' I hesitated. Then, thinking so cherubic a being could do me no harm, I let him in. But as soon as the door was closed he began to grow, and before many months I became his slave. When too late I realized it was a trick of Satan to lure me into his kingdom."

II. It is easy to form habits which it is hard to break. Imperceptibly we change, so that things we once regarded as quite out of the range of our conduct we do without a twinge of conscience. I speak now of

things really sinful and hurtful; not such as an enlightened conscience may come to see in a truer, more Christian view. Indulgence in what we know is wrong stealthily but surely weakens and finally destroys the soul's consciousness of God. This led to Israel's captivity. You cannot deliberately do wrong when you think of God. Could you tell a lie, or use a profane word, or be sulky, or angry, or revengeful, if you stopped to think he was looking into your heart? Could you read an impure book or think impure thoughts if you considered that at that moment God knew every secret imagination? No; we are afraid or ashamed to sin when we think of him. Our only safety is to remember always, "Thou God seest me." Remember, too, that he loves us while he hates sin. Let us not only fear to offend him; let us be sorry to grieve him. Let us do nothing that will lessen our consciousness of his presence.—Rev. J. H. Knowles.

III. Then there is the loss of spiritual power. In addition to the ruin of guilt, the gospel recognizes a loss of spiritual faculty or power. The eye is a little spot, the vital point of vision smaller still, but if it receives a fatal hurt all the light of the universe is lost. The glory of the summer day, the beauty of the world, the smiling faces of friends—are all blotted out. If the ear loses its hearing, all familiar voices, tender tones and sweet strains of music go with it. So when a soul loses its spiritual power, all is lost. There is deep significance in the figures used to describe the soul lost in sin; it is blind, deaf, a heart that perceives not, and the final habitation is "outer darkness." How solemn, therefore, the Saviour's question, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—The Advance.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Unrealized Loss (182).

We take it for granted that what we once possessed, we still possess. We think that what yesterday we loved and cherished is still in the circle of our life today. And we know not that in secret it has left us, and stolen away from our side on feet of wool, and onward we move, uncon scious of our loss, supposing it is still in our company. . . . .How easy and how simple life would be, if the best and the highest warned us of its going. . . . To have a name to live and yet be dead; to trade on our reputation of yesterday; to comfort ourselves in secret on those graces that were ours once, but now are ours no longer—that is the tragedy of human character, more terrible than any sudden fall.—G. H. Morrison.

The Soul's Slavery (183).

In the Oriental jungle is a fig-tree that begins life as a parasite. A thin, slender shoot, tremulously weak, leans lightly on the base of some tall tree, clings and grows. Soon a second shoot, slight and frail, emerges near the root, but at a different angle from its aspiring brother; and others as delicate follow, until the trunk of the host is sprawled over by naked running shoots, crafty and insidious. The trunk becomes enveloped in living lace, sapping the life-blood of the tree at all points. A greedy, intractable, implacable foe, it gives no quarter, but flourishes upon its dead or dying friend, upon which in its youth it leaned delicately for support.

So did idolatry insinuate itself into Israel, and in a few years the goodly tree was overrun and blasted by the stealthy murderer. So evil ever beguiles, enslaves, and destroys.—Watkinson.

The Bitter Memories of Sin (184).

The most impressive scene I ever witnessed at Vanderbilt University was when the venerable Chancellor Garland announced from the platform that a certain graduate, whose name he withheld, had sent back his diploma. It had been returned with the confession that in a single examination the student had used forbidden help, and though he had never been suspected and years had passed, he had never had any peace of mind. He, therefore, returned his diploma and asked that his name be stricken from the roll of alumni and announcement made of his confession, preferring public disgrace rather than to bear longer the intolerable memory of a single secret sinful act.

The Chancellor said that he had after much consideration decided that the young man's repentance and suffering had been a sufficient atonement for his error, and insisted on his retaining his diploma. But the young man would not consent. "And here is the diploma," said Dr. Garland, holding out the mutilated parchment; "but I have cut out the name and the secret shall die with me." The hall was as still as death. The Chancellor had conveyed his lesson in morality. No one who heard that short impressive statement and saw the effect upon the students could believe such a thing likely to occur again as long as that tradition remained at the University—Charles Foster Smith.

A Perverted Imagination (185).

Let a young man have a pure imagination and his world will be a world of glory. He may be poor, and his days may be monotonous, but life will be clad for him in royal splendor. Let sin once creep into the imagination, it defiles and pollutes everything. Unto the pure all things are pure. The noble heart lives in a noble world. Unto the impure there is nothing pure. And the world teems with horrible suggestion, in face and form, in meadow and in moor, and that is what I mean by poverty. It is not in what you have that life is rich. Life is really rich in what you see. One man may see more in a single beech-tree than another in twenty miles of his estate. Therefore I beg of you, watch your imagination. Do not degrade it to improper uses. Impoverished, life is not worth living, as there are some here tonight who know too well.—G. H. Morrison, D.D.

Debasing the Nation (186).

If there are any who think lightly of sin and who are encouraged in sin by an implicit undertsanding that no great harm will come of it, I pray you to be sure your sin will find you out. Higher thoughts will one day visit you, higher aims will one day win your spirit, a nobler view of life present itself to you; and how are you to respond to those new and higher calls if your nature is debased by sin? You do yourself incredible wrong. There are duties in life, social, domestic, personal, which you will despise yourself if you cannot discharge, and you will not be able to discharge them if in youth you do not act your part well and keep yourself unsullied by the contamination of sin. There are enjoyments in

life for which sin unfits you. I do not speak of the highest enjoyments, but of natural enjoyments, in the same kind as those you now crave, and which are possible only to those whose conscience is laden with no evil remembrances, whose nature is contracted and withered by no familiarity with sin, who can give themselves to enjoyment with the freedom, fearlessness and abandonment which are reserved for the innocent only. In vain will you strive to leave your past behind you. If you sin, then no more at all can you have that fineness of feeling which only ignorance of evil can preserve, no more that high and great conscientiousness which once broken is never repaired, no more that courage and wisdom which accompany an upright and steady career, no more that respect from other men which instinctively departs from those who have lost self-respect.—Selected.

Dooming the Soul to Remorse (187).

The historians tell us that Charles IX of France, in his youth, had humane and tender sensibilities. The demon who tempted him was the mother who had nursed him. It is said that when at first this unnatural mother proposed to Charles the massacre of the Huguenots, he shrank from it in horror: "No, no, madame! they are my loving subjects."

Had he cherished that sensitiveness St. Bartholomew's Eve would never have disgraced the history of his kingdom, and he himself would have escaped the fearful remorse which crazed him on his deathbed. To his physician he said in his last hours, "Asleep or awake, I see the mangled forms of the Huguenots passing before me. They drip with blood. They make hideous faces at me. They point to their open wounds, and mock me. Oh, that I had spared at least the little infants at the breast!" Then he broke out in agonizing cries and screams. Bloody sweat oozed from the pores of his skin. He was one of the very few cases in history which confirm the possibility of the phenomenon which attended our Lord's anguish in Gethsemane. That was the fruit of resisting, years before, the recoil of his conscience from sin. He trampled his conscience under foot, but he did not escape that which we call "remorse," a word which comes from the Latin word which means "to bite back."—The Tears of Jesus.

The Soul Deluded (188).

Poisoned pleasures often cast the charm of magic upon the imagination. Seen from afar, the stolen apples look large and rosy, the stolen waters sparkle as they flash above the fountain, and the stolen pleasures promise unwonted piquancy and crispness. Sin, wearing her disguise of beauty, points to the morrow, but the pleasure promised is always a mirage that flees on before the eager pursuer. Never once have the stolen waters been sweet. In the first fall, the forbidden fruit held an unwonted bloom. But the apple turned to ashes, and the stolen waters left a bad taste in the mouth, and when the incident was over the garden had become a desert, full of thorns and thickets. Achan coveted the wedges of silver. In imagination the white metal shone like the sunlight. And the theft ended with broken hearts and lives. It is the old, old story. Queen Jezebel is discontented in her palace and her gardens because, looking out of her window, she sees another vineyard whose waters and fountains look sweet. But when the friend's villa has been stolen, and the coveted

possession was hers, the multitudes who once cheered the beautiful queen began to frown upon her, and the drama ended with ermine robes dragged through the mire, and with a woman's corpse lying in the street. Judas is typical. From the beginning of history to the present hour, every betrayal of office or trust fund, or solemn pledge of friendship and honor, has ended with the soul revolting against its sin and itself. The Pittsburg banker commits suicide; the youth who robbed the express company confesses and goes to jail; the disgraced merchant dies of a broken heart. For he that sinneth wrongeth his own soul.—N. D. Hillis.

The Soul's Final Ruin (189).

A gentleman from New York met in the South a lady of wealth and beauty and married her. She had been brought up a Christian girl, but when she found herself in the circles of wealth and fashion in New York City she gave way to the temptations which too often prove ruinous to young people in such situations. Dinners, receptions, balls, the opera, were the order not of one day, but of many days. Her whole life was a whirl of gayety and pleasure. Once, when returning from a trip to California, the train on which she rode was wrecked, and she was among the dangerously wounded. She was carried into the nearest railway station and laid upon the floor. She was told she had only an hour to live. She was anxious to get back home, but that was impossible. "Only an hour to live! Is that all, doctor?" she piteously asked. "That is all," he replied.

Then she gave way to the saddest cries the doctor had ever heard. "I have spent my money so foolishly. I might have done so much good with it. But I've done nothing but lead the fashion. And now it is too late." The cry of a lost soul bewailing the irreparable past.

XXII. YOUTH FOR CHRIST.

"Remember Thy Creator in the Days of Thy Youth."—Ecclesiastes 12:1. (Children's Day).

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. The infinite value of a child is attested by its susceptibility for God. "What is the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Frederick Harrison, the agnostic, in his autobiography, says, "You put yourself in the planetary space, a mere dot, and think that the almighty Maker can have discernment of you!" He postulates the existence of the Infinite, and then denies him the power to discern the minute. But surely if God is great enough to create worlds, he is great enough to regard the infinitesimal. The power which passes, on the one hand, beyond the range of the telescope, must pass equally beyond that of the microscope. He can tell the stars and call them by their names; he must be able to number the hairs of our heads. How great is the son of man, since God can visit him, and find something in him, which responds to his own nature and satisfies the hunger of his heart for love! But does God visit even a little child? Certainly! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any —." "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Jesus called a little child unto him."

The fact that a child may receive and believe in him proves conclusively that it has a profound affinity with the Son of God; and on this account, it outweighs in value all the universe in which it lives. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" Thou receivest praise which creation's myriad voices never equal.

II. The child's greatness is attested, also, by its capacity for rule.

"Thou madest him to have dominion." Listen to the ancient word,— "And God said: Let us make man after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish, the fowl, and the cattle." In man's creation he was crowned with glory and honor, and all things were put under his feet. Jesus, enthroned and glorified, is the type and pattern of the height to which any child of Adam's race may be raised. That little child in your arms may not only become President of the United States, or other great statesman, preacher, writer, of the next age, but may share Christ's throne, may reign with him in light, may sit beside him in heaveniy places, because it is written, "He hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us unto our Lord, kings and priests."

III. Attestation of a child's greatness is given in the destined ultimate supremacy of the child's type of religion.

"Thou hast ordained strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." From the pure calm heavens, the psalmist turns to the contrast presented by the existence of moral evil. There are everywhere the enemy and the avenger; but they shall be stilled and silenced by the child-heart, with its simplicity, purity, and praise: "For God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to put to shame the strong and base things of the world. and

things that are despised, and things that are not, that he may bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence."—Rev. F. B. Meyer.

Jesus Wants the Children.

1. God wants your early years. Children, learn what Jesus wants from you. He wants your childhood. He wants your faith and your love. He wants you to pattern your childhood after his. He wants you to obey your parents as he obeyed his. He wants you to treat with respect those who are older. He wants you to ask questions and to learn. He wants you to make a public confession of his name, as he publicly confessed his Father's name. He wants you to join in his worship and praise.—David Gregg, D.D.

2. The wrong of withholding our youth from God. A Christian woman was employed as a nurse in a house where a loved mother lay ill. Her daughter, a girl of fifteen, had never given her heart to Christ, fearing that by so doing she might lose some of her youthful pleasures, and saying that when she grew older, then she would give herself to him. One day she came into the house bringing a bouquet of beautiful fresh carnations for her mother. The nurse commented upon their loveliness and then said: "We will not take them up to your mother now—they are too fresh and beautiful; we will wait a few days until they have begun to fade and wither." The young girl was surprised, almost indignant, and sought an explanation for such a seemingly unnatural course. Said the nurse: "Is not this what you are doing to your heavenly Father? Are you not by your conduct reserving for yourself the beauty and freshness of your young life, and waiting to offer him the faded blossoms from which all the beauty and freshness has departed?"—Grace A. Stevenson.

3. Children in the Kingdom of Heaven. I believe that we may take these words of our Saviour in their literal meaning, as implying that the kingdom of God, the assembly of redeemed souls in heaven, is in great measure made up of little children. All that die in infancy are saved, and half the human beings born into this world die in infancy. If the entire human race should be gathered, sanctified, and forgiven, before the throne above, still each second one there would never have known more of this sinful and sorrowful world than comes within the brief experience of early childhood.

"God took them in his mercy, as lambs untasked, untried;
He fought the fight for them; he won the victory, and they are sanctified."

4. The Child Jesus and the Children. The Gospel has not narrowed, surely it has enlarged, the privileges of the kingdom; the New Covenant can not be less generous to the young than the Old Covenant was.

A bridge-sentence between the Old and the New is found in Psalm 8:2, which was quoted by Christ, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." In the East a man-child is still kept at the breast till his third or fourth year, and under the stimulating sunshine Oriental children are much more precocious than the Occidental. A four-year-old child can thus intelligently sing Christ's praise. This text, so honored, reveals the whole spirit, genius, and tendency of Christianity, for it teaches us to cherish great expectations regarding the young. On

the threshold of the Gospels we are introduced to two infants—Jesus and John the Baptist. The childhood of Jesus is most significant. The first Adam had no childhood, for he was never born; but the second Adam came to earth as a babe. This fact hallows childhood as nothing else could, and it appeals powerfully to young hearts, and wonderfully recommends Christ to them as the Saviour of children. The childhood of Jesus makes it easy for a little child to sing with intelligence and feeling such a hymn as "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." Christ no longer appears to them a far-off, unearthly, and terrifying being.—Wells.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

"Train Up a Child" (190).

The memory of the prayer which he had learned by his mother's knee saved, so he himself tells us, a great American statesman from atheism. "The older I grow," says Thomas Carlyle, "and I am now upon the brink of eternity, the more comes back to me the first sentence of the Catechism which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes, 'What is the chief end of man? To Glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.' "—George Milligan. D.D.

Religious Nurture (191).

Dr. Hillis cited the following incident in emphasizing the value of religious nurture:

A century ago an English deist, calling upon Coleridge, inveighed bitterly against the rigid instruction in Christian homes. "Consider," said he, "the helplessness of a little child. Before it has wisdom or judgment to decide for itself it is prejudiced in favor of Christianity. How selfish is the parent who stamps his religious ideas into a child's receptive nature, as a molder stamps the hot iron with his model! I shall prejudice my children neither for Christianity nor for Buddhism nor for atheism, but allow them to wait for their mature years. Then they can open the question and decide for themselves." Later the poet led his atheistic acquaintance into the garden. Suddenly he exclaimed: "How selfish is the gardener who ruthlessly stamps his prejudice in favor of roses and violets and strawberries into a receptive garden-bed. The time was when in April I pulled up the young weeds, the parsley, the thistle, and planted the garden-beds out with vegetables and flowers. Now I have decided to permit the garden to go until September. Then the black clods can choose for themselves between cockleberries and currants and strawberries."

The Child Spirit (192).

The child spirit exemplifies humility, sense of helplessness and dependence, trust, the wholesomeness of an unvarying docility; and no less the habit of lively expectation, of keen interest in comrades, the longing for love, an unembarrassed openness of heart—and above all a marvelous plasticity; so much can be done with a child! So far forth, here is our pattern. We are, fundamentally, to be continuously plastic, character never hardening, growth never completed, always open to new impressions and new truth, ever keenly expectant—our faces set, with shining eyes, to the future: our uplook tender, trustful, dominant: our motives

got, not from the conventional world or from inward bias, but from the Father; our nature ever expanding, vision ever widening, our interest in our fellows always lively and unhampered by convention, like the normal wide-awake boy who cares little whether his comrade is ragged or well dressed, with no hardening consciousness of class or earthly rank.—Selected.

Church and Child (193).

The proper attitude of the Church to the child is presented to us in Ruth 4:16: "And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it." Naomi-like, the mother Church, at best, welcomes the child, shields the child, fosters and trains the child, and has her ample reward in the child. For she is nourished by her nursing, as Naomi was by Obed. We can not set bounds to the far-reaching influences of such godly nurture; "Obed, he is the father of Jesse, the father of David," of whom, according to the flesh, the Messiah came.

The place given to the child is the gauge of civilization in every age and nation. What have classical Greece and Rome done for the child? Not one book for chidren was ever written by a Greek or Roman author. They had fairy tales and nursery tales, but they were all composed for grown-up people. The bare recital of their treatment of children appalls one. Plato, following the lead of Sparta wishes no mother to know her own child. He would have all the babies reared by the State in a common pen or fold. Seneca praises the drowning of weak children. When a child was born at Athens, Sparta or Rome, it was usually laid at the feet of the father. If he turned away, it must die; but if he stooped down and lifted it up, it was allowed to live. The children of even the rich and educated were sometimes killed or exposed. No one questioned the absolute right of the father to dispose of them as he wished. The traveler can still see at Athens and Sparta the spots where little infants were left to die of cold or hunger or be devoured by wild beasts. Some of the boys who seemed to be strong were picked up and trained as gladiators or slaves, while the girls were reared for a life of shame. Often beggars took the little outcasts, maimed and disfigured them, and exhibited them in public that they might extract charity from the passers-by. Socrates tells how loudly a mother used to scream when her first child was taken from her, implying that she did not scream so much, if at all, when her other children were destroyed.

Classical culture was childless. Their poets, painters, and sculptors usually do not notice the child at all, or, if they do, it is not for his own sake. Great as they were—the intellectual tutors of civilized nations—they failed to discover the child or the unspeakable value of his training. He was usually left to the care of the slaves, who did not fail to teach him all their own vices.

Paganism, ancient and modern, knows not how to reverence the child. The exceptions are very few; ancient Egypt is the most remarkable among them. Take China for example. A Chinese town has what is known as the "Child's ditch." Like the Barathron at Athens and Taygetus at Sparta, it is the place where children are left to die.—James Wells, D.D.

Child Nurture (194).

The late John Fiske called attention to the fact that while the young of birds and beasts are dependent upon their parents only for a few weeks, or months, in the human family this period of dependence stretches out into years. The object unquestionably is that there may be ample opportunity for character-molding.

And this is the central purpose of the home—the moral and spiritual nurture of the child nature, so that, without any need of earthquake conversions or cyclone revivals the young may grow up into Christ as naturally as by instinct, the fledgling robin becomes the nest builder.

Think you that there would be a jar or a wrench when the child, naturally, at the age of discretion, steps into true relationship with God, his Father? I shall never forget the story of a little Scotch girl, not many months over, and raised in the church of her fathers. A preacher was stopping at the house where Mary served and one afternoon he met her in the yard, and asked her abruptly, "Mary, have you found Jesus?" Here eyes opened wide, her armful of kindling wood dropped to the ground, her lips parted in amazement as she breathlessly responded, "Why, I dinna ken that I had lost him."

But it is just here that the home so often fails. The fact is that many so-called Christian homes are essentially heathen homes, in the ideals which they enthrone in the child-mind, and the atmosphere with which they surround the child-life. Sometimes this results from lack of opportunity; fathers are absent from dawn till dusk, and mothers overburdened with a multiplicity of cares. A neighbor laddie, whose father is a traveling man, recently, offended by some rebuke administered during the father's brief home coming, said, "I wish that man who is staying at our house would go away again." The conditions which this incident emphasizes are rather a tragedy than a joke.

But in many cases lack of inclination—which means lack of a truly spiritual outlook on life—accounts for this failure to nourish the spiritual life of the child. It is one of the curses of the commercial spirit of this commercial age that it stamps its false estimates of life upon the innocent heart of childhood. Could any more tragic vision be conjured up than that of the child holding up its soul, in a worldly home, that the life-stamp may be put upon it, only to have the sordid dollar mark set there?

"As a Little Child" (195).

A number of years ago, in a village of New York, there lived a minister of deep piety, who was peculiarly successful in meeting a class of men then common in that country, who prided themselves upon their fancied elevation of thought and character which enabled them to look down upon Christians, and particularly Christian teachers, with the condescension of unquestionable superiority.

One of these men was found by this minister laboring in his hayfield. The minister followed his parishioner for a time in the field. The farmer busily swung his scythe, stopping occasionally to address the minister in a bantering tone.

After some general conversation the minister had spoken of the church and its services.

"Oh," was the ready reply, "I have not time to bother myself about religion." And then, after a little, "If there is a God, I think I will keep out of his way until he explains some things to me a little more clearly and doesn't threaten so much."

The minister did not answer this fling. Presently the farmer called to his little girl, who was busily playing with the new mown grass: "Emily."

At once the little girl came toward him.

"Take care or I shall cut you," said the father, as the child ran perilously near the scythe. "Go to the end of the lane. Be sure not to open the west gate, and wait for me."

As the child turned to obey her father, the minister spoke to her:

"Emily why did your father warn you away from his scythe?"

She looked surprised, but answered, "So that I would not be hurt."

"Why did he tell you not to open the west gate?" continued the minister.

"I don't know," said the child, now somewhat alarmed by his questioning; and she darted away.

Again the minister called after her. "Emily, are you not too busy to bother yourself——." But Emily was already on the way, and did not look back to answer. Then turning to his parishioner, the minister said slowly: "As a little child. Whosover shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." So he left him that day.

Some months after this little Emily was taken very ill. She had learned to love her pastor, and her Saviour also. The pastor and his parishioner stood side by side before the couch on which the father's pet lay dying.

"Emily," said the pastor, "do you love Jesus?" She looked up and smiled. Again he asked: "Do you remember what Jesus said of children?" Her lips whispered the answer, "Suffer little children to come unto Me."

The father was in tears. As the pastor turned from the room he laid his hand on his parishioner's shoulder, and again repeated the words, "As a little child! As a little child!"

A few weeks later, in the village church, the now stricken father stood by the side of his Christian wife to be received into membership; and with broken accents which sent a tide of deep emotion through the congregation of worshipers, he said, "I come as a little child."—Christian Work.

In the Fold (196).

A lad after being taught the lesson of the "ninety and nine" went home and told his father that he wanted to "be in the fold," he wanted to become a Christian. "O, you are too young," was his father's only answer. At dusk a storm was approaching, and the father sent the boy out to put the sheep into the fold. "Did you get them all in safely?" the father asked when he returned. "I put all the old sheep in." "You don't mean that you left the lambs out, do you?" "Why, of course, father; I thought they were too young." "You are right," then answered the father.

"You can only be safe from the storms of temptation by being in the fold of the Good Shepherd, and you cannot enter too young."

When We Teach a Child (197).

What do we mean when we teach the child?
We put a thought that is sweet and mild
Into a mind that is waiting for seed,
Into a heart that has never felt greed.
The man with such thoughts is never beguiled,
For we teach the man when we teach the child.

What do we do when we teach the child?
We take the treasures which may be piled
In lesson or poem or nature's store,
And transform them all into golden ore
Of character, which can not be reviled:
The strong man comes from the well-taught child.

What do we do when we teach the child?
We take the nature, untamed and wild,
And mold it into a life serene,
Witn heart and will and judgment clean.
We make the man who is undefiled
When we teach, as we ought, the little child.

What do we do when we teach the child?
We plant the truth, which The Undefiled,
Our Lord and Master, said freedom makes.
Through knowledge, true freedom comes and takes
Its place, and dominates passion wild:
We have saved the man, when we've saved the child.

XXIII. GOD'S PARDONING GRACE.

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.—Isa. 1:18.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In preaching on the invitation of grace with its promise of pardon Rev. E. Mason developed the subject along the following lines:

I. You believe that the Gospel is true; perhaps upon no one point are your convictions so full and clear and decided. It matters not whence this conviction has been derived; we have the fact, and here we take our stand and make our appeal. Why not embrace it?

II. You admit the Gospel record to be true and you also approve of the entire subject matter of its testimony. The human mind, unclouded by prejudice and unperverted by sophistry, is always in favor of the Gospel. If the Gospel is not only true, but if in all its principles and claims it is precisely what you feel it ought to be; if you expect, sooner or later to come upon the ground where it would put you, and be what it requires you to be,—why, we ask, in view of all that is intelligible in your convictions of the truth and reasonableness, why not embrace it?

III. Conscience, enlightened by the truth, requires you to embrace the Gospel, reproves you for not doing it, and heralds a painful retribution for refusing or neglecting to do it. Conscience may be stupid sometimes and not speak; but its voice whenever heard, is clearly, decidedly, uniformly in favor of practical religion.

IV. You feel that the Gospel is the very thing for need; that is, as you look at it carefully, it is precisely adapted to all those wants which, as unsatisfied, are the causes of your disquietude and pain. You see and feel that it is the very hope your troubled spirit needs. You have no doubt that it is a good hope, a well-founded hope; why not embrace it and let your emancipated spirit go free?

* * *

Rev. Dr. George F. Pentecost, in presenting this subject of God's offer of forgiving mercy, and his challenge to the sinner to accept it, used the following divisions.

I. In the Scriptures, God is seen dealing with man more as an estranged favorite whom he is seeking to reconcile to himself, than as an offender under the law whom he is seeking to punish. Who can read the story of God seeking after Adam in the garden where he had hid himself, without seeing that God came and called, not for the sake of punishing the offenders, but in order to save and comfort them concerning their sin, with an assurance of his love and grace? The Bible is not so much the revelation of the purpose of God to punish sin, to vindicate the law and satisfy justice, as to recover man to himself and fulfill in him all the good pleasure of his blessed will; though "he will by no means clear" the persistently and deliberately guilty rejecters of grace.

II. It is, therefore, the Gospel, and not the Law, which is of prime importance in studying the revelation of God. When I say the Gospel, I do not mean the Scriptures of the New Testament only, but the Gospel

in the Old Testament as well; for that also is saturated with the gospel of God's love. The first as well as the last message to sinful man contained in the Bible is a word of grace. The Law was not given to save; it can only condemn. It was given to reveal sin; to lead man to the right point of view, by showing him his true condition as a sinner before God; and, so far as its ceremonial enactments were concerned, to care for him as a schoolmaster or tutor, till Christ should come with all the fullness of grace and truth, to set him free from condemnation and death and introduce him to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

III. Jesus, who is the perfect revelation of God, the "brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," is everywhere seen in the New Testament as God's well-beloved Son and Servant meting out grace to sinners. All up and down that weary land we hear his tender voice crying out, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "For God sent me not to condemn the world, but that the world, through me, might be saved."

ILLUSTRATIVE TRUTHS AND INCIDENTS.

Hard to Convince Men (198).

The hardest thing I ever attempt to do is to try to show men and women who do not know Christ how wonderfully tender and kind he is. Once in the streets of Baltimore three little sisters were standing at a shop window full of toys, and the two who could see were trying to describe what they saw to the blind sister. They were exhausting their powers of description to bring to the mind of the little blind girl what they saw. But although she listened greedily, they could present only an imperfect representation. The gentleman who saw the circumstance said that it was extremely touching to hear them try to describe the collection of toys in the store, but they could not do it. My dear friend, that is just like trying to tell you about Jesus. You must come and see for yourself.—Banks.

No Inexpiable Offenses (199).

The ancient Romans recognized what they called "inexpiable crimes." But Christianity knows no "inexpiable offenses; it leads us perpetually from repentance to love, and from love to repentance, it discloses a Mediator exercising infinite mercy and forgiveness.

A Great Saviour (200). Said John Newton when near the end of his life: "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things—that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Saviour."

Forgiveness For All Sinners (201).

H. C. Trumbull said when he was in Libby Prison the news came that his wife was in Washington, and his little child was dying: and the next news that came was that his child was dead, and the mother remained in Washington in hopes that her husband could come with her and take that child off to New England and bury it; but that was the last he heard. One day the news came into the prison that there was a boat from City Point, and there were over nine hundred men in the prison

rejoicing at once. They expected to get good news. Then came the news that there was only one man in that whole number that was to be let go, and they all began to say, "Who is it?" It was some one who had some influential friend at Washington that had persuaded the government to take an interest in him and get him out. The whole prison was excited. At last an officer came and shouted at the top of his voice, "Henry Clay Trumbull!" The chaplain told me his name never sounded so sweet to him as it did that day. That was election, but you can't find any Henry Clay Trumbull in the Bible. There is no special case in the Bible. God's proclamations are to all sinners. Everbody can get out of prison that wants to. The trouble is, they don't want to go. They had rather be captives to some darling sin.—Moody.

"He Did Not Scold Me" (202).

Many years ago a man took to drinking and fell so low that his family disowned him, and at last even his wife cast him off. One night hungry, penniless, and footsore, he stumbled into the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago. Some one was singing, "There's a wideness in God's mercy," and as he tells it now, "It just broke me all up." When the meeting was over he wandered out to the home where his wife lived with her father. He threw himself down in the back yard, hoping that when morning dawned, he might get a glimpse of his little boy, whom he was no longer permitted to visit. As the eastern sky began to blush, and the old song kept ringing in his ears, he says: "Instead of creeping up to the window, I just crept up to the feet of Jesus, and greatly to my astonishment," he adds, "he didn't scold me,—he knew I had been scolded enough,—and he didn't pity me; and he didn't give me any advice, either. He knew I'd had plenty of that. He just put his arms around my neck and loved me. And when the sun arose I was a new man."—Brooklyn Eagle.

Another Chance (203).

The wife of a business man in Chicago was smitten with a peculiar malady that affected her brain. The physicians were called but brought no relief. He left his business and devoted himself to the restoration of the sick one. They went abroad and he put her under the care of the most eminent physicians, but all in vain. At last a doctor said: "I have one more suggestion to make. You tell me her childhood was spent in the South. Take her back. Let her wander in the fields and pluck the flowers and listen to the birds, and wade in the brook, and perchance the influence of childhood will awaken the dormant brain." He took her to the Southland, and she wandered through the fields and plucked the flowers and waded in the brook. At night she lay down to sleep. By the bedside was the husband watching every move. In the morning when she opened her eyes she looked around in bewilderment for a little, then she said, "Where have I been?" He answered, "You have been upon a long journey, but you have come home," "And where have you been?" "I have been always at your side just waiting, waiting." I bring the message of a Saviour who through all the days of your wandering has been at your side waiting, yearning, loving. O come to yourself, look into his eyes with the light of faith, throw yourself into his arms.—Pres. Advance.

"Come" (204)

Mr. Moody was holding a service when a business man came and tried to get into the building. They were singing that hymn, "O Word of Words the Sweetest," and had just reached the chorus, "Come, Oh, Come to Me;" that was all this business man heard. He made his way back to his office, but he could not attend his business. Across the pages of the books he saw that word, "Come," written. He made his way back to his home, and he heard it in the ticking of his clock. He shut himself up in his room, and he heard it in the beating of his heart, and he told Mr. Moody that alone in his room, down on his knees, repenting of his sin, he received Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

When Mr. Moody was preaching in New England, a young man heard him night after night. He felt that he ought to be a Christian, and again and again his hand was lifted for prayer; and again and again he passed into the inquiry service; but he said, "Tomorrow night, I will settle it," and leaving the building, he passed away from the service. Walking out to his home at the edge of the city, he passed underneath a row of trees on the way to his house. Suddenly he stopped. The moonlight was shining through the trees, he took his walking stick and drew a line across the pathway. Then he stepped back and looked at it. "Now," said he, "if I step over that line it means that I will surrender. If I go around that line it means that my determination is against Jesus Christ." He stood looking at the line only for a moment, and then deliberately passed over it. And it is a bit of history that the man who that night found himself near to the kingdom of God, and by an act of his will simply stepped over the line, became one of the most earnest Christians, and one of the most faithful workers for Christ.—Chapman.

XXIV. SOUL PEACE.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."—Isaiah 26:3.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. David Magie unfolded this text along the following lines of cleavage: 1. The author of this peace is God. 2. The peace is "perfect" in its source; its measure; and its adaptation to our needs. 3. To make it ours we must link ourselves to God by a childlike trust. 4. We cannot fail to realize that many who hope for salvation lack this perfect peace. Sometimes God withdraws it in order to awaken a deeper sense of dependence. Sometimes this lack results from physical or mental conditions. Sometimes we concentrate our attention upon our trials instead of on God. 5. But it is not only our privilege but our duty to enjoy it. Without it we lack Christian comfort: we are unfitted for effectual service; we cannot glorify God as we ought.

* * *

Rev. Dr. W. L. Watkinson penetrates to the heart of the verse in the following inspiring summing up of its implications:

Let us not dismiss this as mere poetry, but cherish it in our heart as the most trustworthy truth we know.

Had we lived in the geological ages we should have thought the earth as we now know it an utter impossibility. Then vast and awful monsters stalked the slime, the sea swarmed with ferocious sharks and snakes, the sky was darkened by winged dragons, and there was not a bird, butterny, or flower. How sceptical we should have been if then one had propnesied of this modern earth with its sky full of singers, its meadows full of flowers, its silver sea a delight! Yet all has come to pass.

And greater things shall come to pass, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. A recent sceptic sneers at what he calls the "green-meadow happiness of the herd;" but to feed amongst the lilies is better, nobler, happier than to redden the meadows with our brother's blood.

* * *

Rev. James A. Stalker, D.D., in discussing this theme, said: In the moral and spiritual sphere everything depends on whether or not the individual is right with God. If not, no agitation or exertion can be too extreme, for "there is no peace to the wicked." Still, rest is both the deepest craving of the human heart and one of the most golden words of the gospel. Never did there fall from the lips of the Saviour a more characteristic utterance than when he said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He knew the secret, for, in spite of the vicissitudes and agitations of his existence there was perrect tranquillity at the center of his being. He was giving of his own when he promised rest to the restless. So he said himself: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" and it is to him we must look when we wish to discover how restlessness is to be cured.

1. By Faith.—When Jesus is called "the author and finisher of faith."

the meaning is not that it is he who produces and perfects faith in us. That he does so is true, but this is not the truth there taught. The meaning is that he was the primary and the supreme exemplar of faith; he exercised it himself in an unexampled degree. The Son of Man was a man of faith, and therein lay the secret of the tranquillity which girt about his tragic existence. He knew why he had been sent to this world, and he believed that everything happening to him was conducing to the end set before him. He taught the same conviction to the children of men. They had not come into the world by chance; each had come in his own time and to his own place; each had a sphere to fill and a work to do; and he was immortal till his work was done. The Heavenly Father would not have brought us here had he not meant well by us; he did not create us to starve or destroy us. If he feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies, much more will he feed and clothe his children. Such a simple conception of life may seem a gospel for the prosperous and for the piping times of peace.

II. By Prayer.—The inner life of our Lord is unveiled sufficiently in the gospels to show the use he made of prayer to recapture the serenity of his spirit and to face the multiplying complexities of his vocation. The land of his birth is a mountainous country, where from the towns a retreat is easy to the solitude of the hill-pasture, and he sought this oratory in all the difficult moments of his career. Accordingly, when it is said that he went up into "the mountains," it is generally useless to ask which mountain is intended, for the reference is simply to the hill-country, which was nearly everywhere. Thither he would escape at night, after getting quit of the crowds by which he was beset, or he would rise up before dawn from among his sleeping disciples and ascend to his favorite haunt. There he would lay his spirit on the bosom of God, and return to the city encompassed with peace and able for the labor which awaited him.

The mere act of entering habitually into the presence of God gives self-control, and so subdues the symptoms of restlessness. But there is more than this in prayer: it brings down peace from on high, and makes available for us the power of Him who is able to make all things work together for good. Even calamities which he blesses are better for us than prosperity without his blessing.

III. By Work.—One of those best acquainted with Jesus said that he "went about continually doing good," and the records convey the impression of a life full to overflowing. Even on the Sabbath, which was naturally a day of rest for a Jew, he could not refrain from doing works of mercy; there were in his nature swelling currents of benevolence which would have their way. It is curious that, with this example before them, so many bearing his name have fled from their fellow men and shut themselves up behind cloister walls. But that their pent-up energy has made them uneasy there is proved by the emphasis laid in monastic books of devotion on accidia, which was accounted one of the seven deadly sins. Usually this is translated "sloth," but it was really restlessness—the uneasiness of those gifted with strong feelings and impulses which found no vent. It is sometimes accounted a sin of the Middle Ages, unknown in the modern world; but there are plenty of victims of accidia among the

unemployed of the upper and middle classes. In country and suburban life there are multitudes sick of a vague disease, which they themselves do not understand, but for which the only cure is the prescription: "Go and do some good to somebody."

The law of nature and the doctrine of the most earnest thinkers is that everyone ought, on the one hand, to have his own work in the state, and, on the other, receive his own share of the common products and rewards. This alone can give true rest to a healthy mind, and he who has thus found his place in the universal plan will, on his own level, experience the promise which was supremely fulfilled in the Man of Sorrows: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

* * *

Bishop Phillips Brooks' illuminating comment on this "perfect peace" which God offers us was: What a vast portion of our lives is spent in anxious and useless forebodings concerning the future, either our own or that of our dear ones! Present joys, present blessings slip by and we miss half their sweet flavor, and all for want of faith in him who provides for the tiniest insect in the sunbeam. Why cannot we, slipping our hand into his each day, walk trustingly over that day's appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that evening will bring us sleep, peace, and home?

* * *

And Rev. George Rudolph Freeman adds: May there rest upon us that peace which is the cure of care, taking from love its anxiety, from bereavement its anguish, from desolateness its loneliness, resting upon human hearts as sunlight upon all the land.

ILLUSTRATIVE TRUTHS AND INCIDENTS.

The Perfect Peace of Implicit Trust (205).

They were a young married couple. The union was in every way a most congenial one, a bond all the more strong and tender because hallowed by a common love to the same Saviour. Soon after the birth of their second child, the young mother was taken ill. The husband would not for weeks allow himself to despair of her ultimate restoration to her former health. But the physician was forced, at length, to pronounce the case beyond hope of cure.

Calling at my friend's house soon after this announcement, he met me at the door and led me into a room apart, and while we were kneeling in prayer, although in an agony of grief, he then and there made a full surrender of that dearest treasure of his heart, which he acknowledged as a now recalled gift of his Heavenly Father's love.

The surrender was complete. Victory over death was won, weeks in advance of its approach. The invalid's trust had been serene and unshaken from the first. Now they are one in confident assurance that all has been ordered in infinite wisdom.

The sick room, on which had rested the gloom of the husband's hitherto inconsolable grief, is now so brightened by his changed look and manner that friends are drawn to it by the cheerful greetings with which their visits are now met.

In an even more beautiful way the invalid mother evinced the reality

and depth of the like joy-imparting surrender. The child was sent to a faithful nurse, who was in the habit of bringing the baby in, every few days, for the mother to see. A friend suggested to the mother that this was mistaken kindness on the part of the nurse, owing to the new pain which each of these partings must give her. "Oh, no," she said. "I had my final parting with the little fellow weeks ago. I gave him up to God as soon as I was assured that I was not going to get well. The pain of parting is over; let the nurse bring him in as she has been doing."

How well for us could we as God's children anticipate our appointed end by an immediate, full, and loving surrender to him of our whole earthly life and of all, even the most valued, of our earthly plans, ambitions, possessions and hopes. From the moment of such voluntary divesting ourselves of it, then, and then only, do we enter on our fullest enjoyment of the world.—Ballard.

In the Haven of Rest (206).

We were wending our way slowly up the road leading from the railroad station. I heard whistling down the valley to the right. It was the clear whistling of a few bars of the chorus:

"I've anchored my soul in the haven of rest,
I'll sail the wide seas no more!"

Then silently in my soul I sang on and said, "I like that tune." It spoke an experience to which I am glad I am not a stranger. It transported me back to the autumn of 1870. It was in Caroline County, Md., on a Friday morning, out in the field on my father's farm.

For weeks I had been exercised about my salvation, seeking peace but not finding it. I was there alone, thinking. I believed there were persons in the community who had found salvation. I said, "If these can be saved, why not I?" Then came the crisis. I had been seeking a blessing, and I was assured there was a blessing for me. Then I stopped work for awhile, stuck the spade in the ground and said, "Whether the Lord blesses me or not, by his help I am going to serve him as long as I live—Hallelujah." Then I found salvation. A great, sweet peace filled my soul.

That Friday morning will never be forgotten while memory lasts. I do not know how they count time in heaven, but I do not think eternity can obliterate or confuse that day. No wonder I like such hymns as these: "O sacred hour, O hallowed spot;" "Where love divine first found me;" and "How happy are they who their Saviour obey."

Some may say—or, at least, think—that experience is rustic. So it may be, but I recall that many of Christ's converts were made under the open heavens.

Some may say it is old-fashioned. I confess it is but it was real. There was a covenant entered into. I want to keep my part of it, and I am certain God will not fail. I am so impressed with its value that I wish millions had an old-fashioned, rustic Friday morning conversion.

I anchored my soul, and the anchor has been holding. I was not deceived. There was no excitement to mislead me. The witnesses were the fields around me and the heavens above me, and I have scriptural reasons for thinking some of the angels beyond the blue sky were looking on and rejoicing. I say again, Hallelujah! May I be faithful until the

pearly gates swing open for the sinner saved by grace on that Friday morning.—Rev. J. C. Smith.

The Strength of Confidence (207).

An explorer in Asia, with the few natives who accompanied him, was driven out of his course by adverse circumstances, met by a sandstorm that caused great discomfort and delay, and finally the little caravan found itself without water. The party struggled on for a time, but one after another the weary natives gave up the march as hopeless and dropped by the way until only one of the four or five remained. Then he, too, became exhausted and could go no farther, and the white man pressed on alone. He believed there was water in the direction in which he was going, and though he was weak with fatigue and half crazed by thirst, he forced himself forward until at last the blessed sound of a running stream reached him. He threw himself down beside the water to drink in new life, to bathe his parched face and hands and his swollen feet, and to gather strength presently to go back to the help of his companions. When asked afterwards how it was that he had so much more endurance than the natives of the country, he answered that he believed the difference to be mental rather than physical. The natives have a dreary creed of fate—what is to come will come, and it is useless to battle—and this robs them of the hope and courage, the determined will that is the heritage of the white man and belongs to the creed of Christianity. The explorer had faith in the final outcome of his mission, he believed in the water ahead and the possibility of reaching it, and so nerved himself to endurance.—Selected.

XXV. THE JOY OF THE REDEEMED.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.—Isaiah 35:10.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. S. Martin, preaching on this joy as meaning deliverance from the crowning influences of sorrow, used the following treatment:

I. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away." 1. The sorrow of bodily disease shall pass away. 2. The sorrow of dying will pass away. 3. The sorrow of bereavement will pass away. 4. The sorrow of poverty will flee away. 5. The sorrows caused by the sins of others will flee away. 6. The sorrows produced by the fear of evil, by dark imaginations, and by blighted hopes, shall flee away. 7. The sorrows of this life's illusions and delusions shall all pass away. 8. The sorrows of sin will pass away. 9. The bitterness of the heart shall flee away.

II. When shall this be? 1. It shall be to the individual saint when his earthly career terminates. 2. To the saints as a body this will be realized at the times of the restitution of all things.

III. By what signs may we be assured that our sorrows will flee away? 1. The first sign is personal faith. 2. A second sign is acknowledged and avowed citizenship in the kingdom of the Saviour. 3. A third sign is the fleeing away of sin—the being cleansed from sin. 4. Another sign is the present good effect of sorrow. 5. A fifth sign is a living hope—hope, born of faith—hope, the child of God's promises—the hope which is the anchor of the soul. When these five signs exist—personal faith in Jesus, avowed citizenship in his kingdom, the fleeing away of sin, the present good effect of sorrow, and a living hope—then our sorrows shall flee away, and our sighings shall forever subside.

* * *

1. Joy and gladness are the heritage of the redeemed. 2. Redemption illuminates this present life with the peace of pardoned sin; the trust of a childlike abiding in Christ, and the hope of a blessed immortality. 3. Redemption means heaven for all eternity.

Alexander Maclaren treats this text as follows: We have then here a picture of what Christ does for us weary journeyers on life's road.

I. Who are the travellers? "Redeemed," "ransomed of the Lord." Israel had in its past history one great act, under the imagery of which all future deliverances were prophesied. Emancipation from bondage is the first thing we all need.

II. The end of the journey. "They shall come to Zion." It is one great distinctive characteristic and blessedness of the Christian conception of the future that it takes away from it all the chilling sense of strangeness, arising from ignorance and lack of experience, and invests it with the attraction of being the mother-city of us all.

III. The joy of the road. The pilgrims do not plod wearily in silence,

but, like the tribes going up to the feasts, burst out often, as they journey into song.

IV. The perfecting of joy at last. "They shall obtain joy and gladness:" but had they not had it on their heads as they marched? Yes: but at last they have it in perfect measure and manner.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Conserved Sunshine (208).

The other night I came from New York on the Fall River line. We had hardly left the dock when we broke a bucket of the wheel and anchored just off the Battery. The hour was that of greatest illumination in the sky-scraper district. It was as if all the constellations had been swept into a heap. The vast pyramid of fiery, aerial shadows was flanked on the left by the Colgate Clock in Jersey City, pulsating with intermittent light, and on the right by the Brooklyn bridge, alive with crawling incandescence.

For two hours I watched the scene with fascinated interest. In imagination I asked the motor-man of one of the trains on the bridge what he had to do with it. "I turn on the power, when the conductor rings the bell, and gear it to the wheels." The wire said: "I bring the power from the dynamo in the laboratory far away." The dynamo said: "I comb the power out of the coal." The coal said: "I produce the motion in the dynamo because my heat is but a mode of motion." The heat said: "I came down long ago and was embalmed in trees and ferns." The tree said: "I got all my growth from the sunlight that fell to me out of heaven."

The next day I called upon an elderly woman who had been overtaken by sorrow and was full of fear for the morrow of her life.

"You have not been accustomed to such thoughts as I am bringing you today?" She confessed that her life had been little concerned with religious experience. It had, however, been prosperous, bright and happy!

For the benefit of others who might now be drinking in the gladness of sunny days I resolved to write out this little parable in order that some might be led to think how important it is, if we are to have fruit in winter, that we should preserve some in the summer. When dark days come, or the night of affliction shuts down, have you some conserved sunshine so that you may say with that noble martyr who prayed just before being beheaded: "I thank Thee, God, for all the joy I have taken in life?"—Selected.

The Herb of Joy (209).

Robert Louis Stevenson saw deep into the meaning of religion in the parable he gives us of his soul's garden. He presents the picture of his going out and conversing with his gardener, and finding one plant everywhere throughout the garden. It flourished there with the greatest profusion, and he said to the man, "What is this herb?" "The herb of resignation," was the response. "Out with it, man; out with it!" was the reply of that courageous soul. "I will have none of it any longer. Replace it with the herb of joy, but see it is the flowering sort." The flowering sort: that is the secret. Not only a joy that is real and inward, but a joy that so scatters its fragrance and its beauty that all men may catch the sweetness;

and that to wander inthe soul's garden is a joy and delight. not only to the Master, but to all his guests.—God's Garden.

The Privilege of the Redeemed (210).

A couple of years ago I went deep-sea fishing on the Maine coast. The sea squirmed and rolled and twisted, and some of us began to feel very miserable. But at length we came ashore, and then it was the stability of things that amazed us, and I could hardly understand the strength of the earth beneath my feet. When a man becomes a Christian something like that happens. The universe stops squirming and comes to rest. It is not that he has become a walking encyclopedia of religion with all his questions and problems settled. He only knows that the old time habit of questioning and doubting, which had become almost constitutional, is strangely, but absolutely, gone. He has reached shore. He is at rest.—John Henry Strong, D. D.

Intimacy With the Unseen (211).

Paul is the classic illustration of mastering this world through intimacy with the unseen world. Judged by his sway over Christian history and present thought and civilization, he has already heavily mortgaged the centuries yet unborn. With gigantic stride he went about the earth, because he inhaled the invigorating atmosphere of the unseen and eternal. His other-worldliness made his this-worldliness intelligent, sane, Christlike. For Paul understood what George Meredith has called "the rapture of the forward view." A friend said to me: "You haven't seen our new house." He had just moved out of his old home into a new one. Tender memories still sing of the old but without losing these, he has moved into his new house, and is very happy. Last October I told my friend goodby at the Hoboken piers. Setting out upon his journey around the world, his last words were: "Pray for us." Five weeks later, ten thousand miles from home, he fell back into the arms of death as into those of a guardian angel. Sad beyond all description was that six weeks' journey of his beloved wife and her brother back to friends and home. Yet the minister aboard the vessel upon which my friend died was never more Christlike and Pauline than when he prayed that "his sudden death might be to him sudden glory."—Rev. Frederick F. Shannon.

The Joy We Overlook (212).

We underrate our happiness because it is so rarely a pure state; it is so usually mixed with other things. Was Scott happy or unhappy when he was writing "Ivanhoe?" We read he was suffering excruciating anguish when dictating it, and took great quantities of laudanum to alleviate the pain. Yet who doubts that with all that there was the highest of joys, the joy of creative activity? Was not his state that which Marie Bashkirtseff describes: "My body weeps and sighs, while my soul inwardly rejoices!" So often, as Browning puts it, our joy is "three parts pain." But the joy is there, not the less real and precious for that. Francis of Assisi and his companions led the hardest and barest of lives Of physical comforts they had none. Yet what was it that led Francis to speak of their band as the "joculatores Domini"—("the Lord's merry men")? A thousand instances show that it is not hardship in itself that

drives away joy; nor the absence of it that produces it. The late tragic event in the Antarctic proves that. Here were men comfortable at home in England; with roofs over them, fires to warm them, their meals ready for them. And yet, of their own free will they leave it all to face the utmost horrors of the uncharted wild; its hungers, its deadly cold. They found their happiness in that; or, rather, in what lay behind it; in great things aimed at and achieved: great things for knowledge, for their country, for their own souls. And amid all the terrors of their situation they carried that happiness to their death. So often is it that in our utterest extremities the rarest feelings leap to birth; "a joy springs up amid distress, a fountain in the wilderness."—J. Brierly.

God's Gift of Joy.

Theodore L. Cuyler was visiting Charles H. Spurgeon. After a hard day of work and serious discussions, these two mighty men of God went into the country together for a holiday. They roamed the fields in high spirits, like boys let loose from school, chatting and laughing and free from care. Dr. Cuyler had just told a story at which Pastor Spurgeon laughed uproariously. Then suddenly he turned to Dr. Cuyler and exclaimed, " Theodore, let's kneel down and thank God for laughter!" And there, on the green carpet of grass, under the trees, two of the world's greatest men knelt and thanked the dear Lord for the bright and joyous gift of laughter.—The Christian Herald.

The Joy of the Lord (213).

Shortly after the death of David Livingstone's beloved wife, he wrote: "In our intercourse in private there was more than what would be thought by some a decorous amount of merriment and play. I said to her a few days before her fatal illness, 'We old bodies ought now to be more sober and not play so much.' 'Oh, no,' said she, 'you must always be as playful as you have always been. I should not like to be as grave as some folk I have seen.' So I have always believed it to be the true way, to let the head grow wise, but keep the heart ever young and playful." So across that land of shadows and trials he walked in a great joy. The saddest faces and most unhappy countenances I have ever seen have sometimes been those in the rich equipages of Fifth Avenue or the great boulevard of Newport, for wealth alone finds happiness an apple of Sodom with ashes at the core.—Selected.

Joy and Gladness (214).

"I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." In the excavations of Pompeii an inscription of the early Christian age was discovered, "Christian, rejoice in the fire." Sir Thomas More, facing a death of ignominy, wrote his wife, "I pray you, dear wife, be merry in God." Where else could one be merry in such an hour?—Life in His Name.

The Joy of Heaven Cannot be Overstated (215).

Once in a wreck on the Atlantic, for twenty-two days we drifted about. For twenty of these days we were in suffering for fear of imme-

diate death, in storm and darkness, drifting over the wild, wild ocean. No sight of the ship, and the food being destroyed in the hold, no fire, and lashed to the mast. I roped myself day after day, and slept standing against the mast, as the water roared around my feet, and we gave up all hope. No more, I thought, shall I see the land of America; no more the Stars and Stripes; no more the little home; no more the wife and the children. But, when on a morning off the coast of Newfoundland (we knew not then what land it was), the sun burst through the clouds and sent heavenly halos down upon the agitated sea, hope began to rise that we might yet be saved. When the dark clouds of smoke from an approaching steamer were seen distinctly on the horizon, we all wept. We could not talk. If we endeavored to speak a word we burst out crying. All cried, sailors, captain and passengers. And when that steamer came in sight, and with tears streaming down our faces, we watched its course, some one proposed that we sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." No one could start it. Every attempt to utter a syllable was to burst into sobs and cries. The steamer came back and took us in tow and took us into St. John's, and we stepped out upon the shore. All was back again, land and houses. We were coming home, and home was still here; wife, children, friends, all were ours again.

Just so it is with the disappointed life. No matter how great the loss, when, out of the storm and the disappointment and despair of this life, we come in sight of the heavenly land, then will all be brought back again that was worth having in this world.—Russell H. Conwell.

XXVI. THE SAFEGUARDED LIFE.

But now thus said the Lord, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Isaiah 43:1, 2.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. A charge given—"Fear not." A righteous, godly fear the believer may have; but the cowardice of the world, which is loud to boast, and slow to act, and quick to doubt—which is prone to distrust even the Almighty and disbelieve the All-true—this he must never know. It becomes neither the dignity of his calling nor the faithfulness of his God.

II. A reason assigned—"Thou art Mine." These words were spoken to Israel after the flesh, and to them they still remain a covenant of peace, sure and steadfast for ever; yet as the relations named—Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour—are not peculiar to them, but are enjoyed in the same degree by every believing heart, we may safely take to ourselves a share in this animating promise. The certainty of the believer's hope does not depend on our holding God, but on God's holding us, not on our faithfulness to him, but on his faithfulness to us.

III. A protection promised. This does not consist in any absence of trial and danger; the expressions of the text rather imply their presence, many in number and various in kind. The protection promised in the text consists in the constant presence with the soul of its unseen but Almighty Saviour. The preserving hand will never be withdrawn, and the grace of the Comforter will strengthen and cheer the soul still in its sorest times of difficulty and distress.—Selected.

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Rev. Percy Ainsworth, in commenting on this theme, said: Then evil is something that threatens the soul. It is not material, but spiritual. It is not in our circumstances themselves, but in their effect upon the inward life. The same outward conditions of life may be good or evil according to their influence on our character. Good and evil are not qualities of things. The world says that health and wealth are good, and that sickness and poverty are evil. If that were true the line that separates the healthy from the sick, the rich from the poor, would also separate the happy from the miserable. But we find joy and sorrow on both sides of that line. We are drawn to look deeper than this for our definition of good and evil. We have to make the soul the final arbiter amid these conflicting voices. Here we must find the true definition of evil.

God's promise can fold us in divine comfort and peace, and that can do something towards interpreting for us every coil of difficulty, every hour of pain. But if this is to be so we must ourselves think of

the soul as God thinks of it. We live in a world where souls are cheap. They are bought and sold day by day. It is strange beyond all understanding that the only thing many a man is not afraid of losing is the one thing that is really worth anything to him, his soul.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A New Experience of God (216).

A few years ago terrible earthquakes swept over South America, desolating many regions, destroying vast amounts of property, and multitudes of human lives. The night of the earthquake one man in its path was awakened in the night by the shock. He had been a very rich man, but in a few moments all his property was destroyed, his own life was in danger, and he was crushed and bruised. He said that in the midnight darkness there came to him a new experience of God. He readjusted himself, as it were, to the mystery of existence, and new faith was born.—Selected.

The Sympathetic Christ (217).

In a niche on the right as you enter the Church of St. Mark in Florence, there sits a plaster Christ, naked, bleeding, abominable, caged behind its grating in a little cairn of votive offerings, tarnished silver hollow shapes of hearts like the castings of outworn passions. Lean and dark he looks out of his tinsel drift—and the very first time of my going there I saw a man kneeling straight up against the foot of the niche, his lips pressed to the grating, all his body a-tremble with prayer. He was a common man to look at, rough-handed, and tears dropping unwiped on the unshaven jaw. Far up the nave I could see the shake of his shoulders as he prayed.

I was gone, half an hour perhaps, and when I was come again, there was the man, kneeling still, his cheek laid to the grating; but he was not crying now. His lips moved at times, busy with a blessed name; he was pale and at peace. As his cheek was pressed to the cage so might it have been to the breast of a woman who had forgiven him, and as I watched, the tawdry Christ turned upon me out of his pale eyes the look, the inscrutable sad triumph of understanding. I became suddenly aware that the niche behind the plaster figure was filled with men's offerings, epaulets, sword scabbards, belts—oh, a man's Christ!—From Christ in Italy.

Protection for All (218).

There is a Persian fable which tells of a young prince who brought to his father a nutshell, which, opening with a spring, contained a little tent of such ingenious construction that when opened in the nursery the children could play under its folds; when spread in the Council Chamber the King and his Council could sit beneath its canopy; when placed in the courtyard the family and all the servants could gather in its shade; when pitched on the plain where the soldiers were encamped the whole army could gather within its enclosure; it possessed a quality of boundless adaptability and expansiveness.

Shielded Amid Temptations (219).

We are not restrained by fear, but the joy of the Lord is our

strength. Our eye is so filled with the sweet luster of the right and pure that it turns instinctively from the lurid lights which are gleams of hell.

"Opportunity makes the thief;" and, in truth, opportunity makes most sinners and occasions most sins. But the soul dutifully occupied is gloriously blind to the sinister opportunity. We have no eye for it, no taste for it, it does not appeal to us, we are practically unconscious of it. It is perhaps only years after, and when all peril is past, that we discover how nigh the kingdom of evil came to us, and how entirely the forbidden thing was within our grasp. The dangerous opportunity greedily seized by the vacant or vicious is actually overlooked by the pure in heart, by men and women charmed and satisfied by diviner things. It is not a question of struggle against an enticing bait. The senses fail to discern it, the imagination does not picture it, it is not entertained by the mind, the will is called upon for no decision. Blessed blindness! The faithful shall "not see death;" and, delighting in God and in his gifts, they frequently fail to discern the devil; they obliterate him by the contempt of unconsciousness. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Satisfy me with chaste delights; let me "have respect unto thy statutes continually."—Watkinson.

"Through the Waters" (220).

The village of Da Sin Tau is the home of the Rev. Ding Li May (Ting Li Mei), one of the most able and consecrated native preachers in the empire. And in the midst of flood conditions exceeding in duration and virulence anything for fifty years, his village has had a deliverance little short of miraculous.

For four months it rained, almost daily. At last the rich, flat soil of a large part of our field became sheets of mud. Every river of China to the extent of its unregulated power—not merely the Yellow River—is "China's Sorrow." When the annual summer rains begin, it spreads desolation along its treeless length. As the river waxes li hai (fierce) in its swelling, it overflows its banks, attacks the foundations of the mud houses, sucks them into its ravening maw, leaving whole villages broken and spent—toppled into ruins.

Siao Kou Hwoa, the river that flows past the Rev. Mr. Ding's village, raved this year without let or hindrance—except in one instance: it "opened its mouth," as the Chinese say (that is, broke its banks), eighteen times within six miles of Da Sin Tau, but never harmed this place. Villages everywhere on both banks were overwhelmed. And villages in this level region are so thick that by merely turning one's head from right to left one can count from thirty to sixty of them.

The river hurled itself with great fury against seventy li of railroad embankment, strewing it all over the peasants' farming plots, and changed its course—a trick of Chinese rivers. In the process it broke the German bridges, culverts and river masonry, wrecking the best work that the foreign engineers had done—all near Da Sin Tau; but that village was spared. Directly across from Da Sin Tau the river crept far out of its course to eat into a big village located on ground higher than Da Sin Tau, which, like the towns of Holland, lies snugly behind its dyke, a few yards from the water, and lower than its surface.

How can such a deliverance be explained? Is it nothing that, in the midst of heathenism, this village has four generations of Christians, and its own church building, pastor, evangelist, and Bible Woman? Also our Girls' Middle School, the hope and prayer-focus of many a Christian family, is there. This Ding clan has conspicuously and signally stood for the Lord in the face of great opposition, loss, and persecution. They have had marked deliverances before, which have bulwarked their faith, and which are now to them earnests of God's grace in these troublous days of flood, famine, pestilence, and civil war.—Charles E. Scott.

Our Refuge (221).

The 46th Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength," is the basis of the battle-hymn of Luther. "A strong tower is our God." The 68th was known among the Huguenots as the "Song of Battles." Savonarola chanted it as he marched to the most precious pyre ever lighted in Florence. After the victory of Dunbar, Cromwell and his army sung the 117th Psalm, "O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people." No man knows what a great part the Psalms have played in the lives of men. These poems, which reflect every praiseworthy human emotion, have associated themselves, like the rain and the sunlight, with all sorts and conditions of men, women and children. The penitential groanings of the sixth Psalm, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger," have been sobbed out by Catherine de Medici, John Calvin, and Mrs. Carlyle. It might be properly called the "Universal Psalm of the Penitent."—The Youth's Companion.

God's Father-Heart (222).

From the fading of the meanest flower that grows, to the cross, with its outstretched arms against the background of the Syrian sky, the deepest voices in nature and in life whisper that God is love. When that truth, struggling up through doubt and difficulty as a sun struggles up through cloud and morning mist, breaks at last upon a soul, a day has dawned that no night will ever darken. The light has come and it has come forever. Here we find the secret of Browning's confident and triumphant song. "The sun will pierce the darkest cloud earth ever stretched;" here we find the secret to the peace of the ancient saint: "Tho he slay me yet will I trust in him;" here we find the open door to the victorious faith that overcomes the world.

A great truth can never become exclusively a private possession. A great privilege, in the economy of God, imposes a great responsibility. You recall the story of Peter and the vision that came to him on the house-top. While meditating on its meaning he hears some one knocking at the door below. The man who is knocking is seeking the very truth that the vision had brought to Peter. We may rejoice in the possession of the great glad truth of which this morning we have been speaking, but we can not claim it as all our own. Even while we meditate on its far-reaching significance do we not hear at our door the knocking of some burdened or some defeated life that needs it? Is there no man whom you know, who is crushed by the weight of a wasted past; no woman groping in the shadows because some hope has gone down like a sun, who is waiting to hear from your lips the message that behind the world's defeats and the world's tears is Almighty Love?

XXVII. THE BLESSED RESULTS OF OBEDIENCE.

"Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isaiah 48:18.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

On "The Blessedness of Obedience," Rev. Dr. G. R. Miller says: God emphasizes the importance of an unbroken, progressive life of obedience to the end. He gives notice that such life is the true and decisive test of loyalty to him. He impliedly says to all his servants, Having engaged with me, I assign you to life service. I make no provision for leave of absence, I grant no vacations; but I give assurance of profits to all who serve faithfully—profits more than equivalent for the service rendered.

* * *

Rev. S. M. Hamilton, D.D., says: Here we find the true test of spiritual life. We often torture ourselves with questions like these, "Am I indeed a Christian? Do I really love Jesus?" We fear that our feelings for him have not the warmth and rapture that should be found in his followers. But keeping his commandments is the only trustworthy evidence of love. Let us not be disheartened because we know little of the inward raptures which some other Christians enjoy. If we are striving for Christ's sake to do the good and right unto all men, we really love him who "went about doing good." If we are striving for Christ's sake to forgive our persecutors and slanderers, we really love him who prayed on the cross, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." An obedient life is the sure token of a loving heart.

How precious and inspiring are the privileges here assured to those who obey. They become in a special sense the beloved of the Father. They are linked to him by the tenderest ties. They enjoy continual and increasing revelations of the glory and power and beauty of Christ.

* * *

In preaching on "The Highly Multiplying Power of Obedience," Bishop William F. McDowell, D.D., said:

I. First obedience to God is man's only way of lifting his own life to its highest levels of possibility. There is such a thing as a man's lift on his own life; there is such a thing as a man's own upward push on his own life that puts his life up to such a level as makes it possible for God to do something with it.

II. In the second place, obedience to the highest puts life in harmony with those eternal forces that make for permanence and enlargement. It is the house divided that cannot stand. It is the seed unplanted that does not multiply. It is the seed planted that links itself with all the forces of earth and air and sky, growth and life and brings, thirty, sixty, an hundred fold. It is the single eye that sees. It is the one serving one master and not two for whom the stars fight in their courses.

You can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. Everything co-operates with the obedient man. Forces of earth, forces of air, forces of sky, forces of right, forces of truth, forces of mercy, forces of love, forces of goodness all co-operate with the obedient life.

III. I remark, in the third place, that obedience to God puts life into harmony with God so that he can multiply life. It is not a bit of poetry that declares one shall chase a thousand. That is a bit of truth. It is not a bit of fiction that makes a little larger statement, that two shall put ten thousand to flight. That is one of the minor scientific facts of human history. I should say that three could put an unnumbered host to flight, if they were in right relations with God himself.

There is the story of the lad with the five little loaves and the two little bits of fish, who heard the word, "Bring them hither to me," and walked up and put them into the hands of one who made no bread for himself after he had fasted forty days, but made bread in quantities for others who had been without food for some hours. The lad saw that marvelous multiplication of his small resources so that the throngs were fed and there was immeasurably more at the end than there was at the beginning. Some of you are wondering what you can do with your lives to make them tell to the greatest possible advantage. Put them in the hands of Jesus Christ. In your hands there is not enough for you to feed yourself with; but in his hands there is enough to feed the world.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

"Mind the Highest Boss" (224).

Sometimes it takes a boy to put things plainly and tersely. I once heard from the lips of a boy one of the most sensible pieces of advice that I ever heard from any one. A question arose one day as to which of two orders should be obeyed, a certain person having received from two in authority slightly different instructions in regard to some work to be done. The matter was of no importance, and it was merely in fun that this perplexed person hesitated between the two orders.

But the boy solved the problem, and he could not have done better if it had been the most serious matter in the world.

"Mind the highest boss," he called out, hearty of voice and lusty of lung. "Mind the highest boss and you'll always keep out of trouble." —The Alabama Baptist.

Obedience the Test of Faith (225).

A slave obeys, not because he wishes to, but because he must; but even he believes or knows that his master has power over him, and so he yields. The soldier obeys his commanding officer because it is his duty, and, death if he rebels; but some generals have aroused such enthusiastic confidence in the breasts of their soldiers that they have followed them because they believed in them. General Sherman said that he could liken the faith that soldiers had in General Grant only to the faith that Christians had in their Saviour. When he ordered, they obeyed; they liked to do it.

The test of a Christian's faith in Christ is his readiness to obey

him. When one has the faith in Christ that leads him to do his will, he has faith. This is the convincing test.—Selected.

The Sure Foundation (226).

The Spreckels Building on Market street, San Francisco, is eighteen stories high. It is a tall, slender, towerlike structure, square in form and apparently without sufficient base for a building of such height. When the great earthquake of 1906 occurred and the whole surface of the earth along the line of the "Portola Fault" was in a tremor, it was estimated by scientific men that the swaying of the tall Spreckels Building carried the center of gravity beyond the base line many times during those fearful forty-eight seconds.

But when the building was erected the wise builder "dug deep and laid the foundations" aright. The building has a steel frame and the frame does not rest upon the loose sand which underlies so much of San Francisco—the architect pierced through the loose material at the surface and anchored the steel frame in great wells blasted from the solid rock and afterward filled in around the bases of the steel frame with cement. When the eighteenth of April came, testing every man's work of what sort it was, the huge weight of the swaying building was held in place because it was founded upon a rock. It gripped that which was abiding.—Rev. Chas. R. Brown, D.D.

Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge (227).

Frederic Robertson gave to one of the greatest sermons of the last century the title "Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge." The title not only describes the message the sermon contains, but by contrast calls up the numerous other ways by which men seek spiritual advancement. Anybody can think of obedience as a means of spiritual discipline, but for just the reason that we have heard of it all our lives and seem to know it so well we are all tempted to look for some more romantic path to spiritual knowledge.—Selected.

Doing (228).

Hearing and seeing and feeling which find no expression in action become a kind of mental and spiritual dissipation no more honorable than physical dissipation through the use of stimulants or opiates. The great truth yields its value only as it finds utterance in terms of life. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."—Selected.

The Condition of Life Harmony (229).

In making an organ pipe the fixed laws of acoustics have to be observed. You cannot make an organ pipe any length you like; unless the relation between the length of the vibration it produces and the position of the so-called nodes and loops of the pipe is observed, you will get no true note at all, but only a hideous noise. But when the mathematical law which prevails in the world of sound is observed, the pipe gives forth its clear and rich tone.

So we cannot get anything out of our lives that shall be beautiful

and fine by willfully trying to force life to be what we should like to have it to be. The condition of life-harmony is surrender to law, obedience to the will of God. When we are at one with God, God can speak in us and through us.

In Dante's vision of heaven he hears the ethereal choir chanting these sublime words: "In his will is our peace."—Rev. D. G. Burrell, D.D.

XXVIII. THE LAMB OF GOD.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, etc."—Isa. 53:4-6.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. The nature of Christ's atonement. 1. The heart of it is in the fact that, in some way, Christ took our place in bearing the penalty of sins. 2. Observe the connection between this passage and 1 Pet. 2:24; 3. Show how this thought is brought out in many hymns, such as:

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?"

and

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me."

II. The purpose of Christ's bearing our sins. 1. That we might die unto sins. Explain the meaning. Show the relation to the pardon of sins and to the desire to commit sin. 2. That we might live unto righteousness. This is a life that seeks to be perfectly conformed to God's law and wish—the only life worth living. This is made possible by Christ's death for us.—Selected.

* * *

This was Spurgeon's favorite theme. In preaching on it on one occasion he said: The grandest doctrine of the Word of God to my mind is the doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. I will contend for every letter of truth, but if I must give up something, I will hold tenaciously to this: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin;" "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

As to this doctrine of sacrifice—to put it plainly, this truth of substitution—Christ Jesus was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. When God the Holy Ghost led you to receive this fact, did it not satisfy the intense craving of your spirit? Did you ever know what perfect rest about sin was till you saw it laid upon Christ, carried away by Christ up to the tree, borne by him upon the tree, and there made an end of by the shedding of his precious blood?

Would anything short of that, do you think, content you now? I am sure it would not. There is a thirst in the human heart that nothing can ever satisfy, but "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

* * *

Archdeacon Hannah adopted the following treatment of this subject in one of his sermons:

I. When Christianity was first proclaimed, the world was well-nigh lost in sin. The noblest cultivation, and the most perfect art, and a skill in law and government which has never been surpassed, were unhappily found to be compatible with a baseness of moral degradation, the very language of which, by God's mercy, has now become obsolete and unknown. Now the Gospel revelation rests upon the prin-

ciple that the removal of the weight and stain of moral evil was the first requisite for the restoration of a higher life; and that no cure could be found for the deeply-seated mischief, except through the renewed contact of God himself with human nature—God himself condescending to assume that nature, with the express purpose of winning back the world to purity and holiness. Christ came, not only to take up man's nature, and to show forth the noblest example of its capacities, but, more than this, by a still more marvellous condescension, he came to die for our sins.

II. We must not rest satisfied, then, with the negative position, that the power of sin has been destroyed. It was the further object of the work of Christ that a higher life might be created through faith in his name. We must pass on from the removal of the hindrances by which man was fettered, to recognize the larger capabilities that were infused through the regenerate life. By the atonement of Christ the strength of sin was virtually broken; but the way was thereby opened for the development of nobler freedom.

III. Our estimate of the measure in which this ideal is fulfilled must be formed from the completeness with which these various duties are acknowledged and provided for; completeness being a fair and reasonable test of any theory of life and conduct.

* * *

Rev. Dr. P. T. Forsyth said: Mere rationalism, apart from the Christian revelation, is bound to end, where historically it has ended, in agnosticism, or in a monism which comes to much the same thing in practice. Without Christ we have no God in the end. And mere spiritualism, or trust in the inner light detached from the historic Word, destroys revelation in other ways. It swallows it up in the fogs, bogs and flows of mere subjectivity. No religion is possible without a revelation, and no Christian revelation is permanently possible without a historic redemption. Religion without a revelation is mere subjective religiosity; and revelation which is not redemption is mere illumination, a mere branch of spiritual culture. It is its theology that distinguishes Christianity both from the world and from all other religions. Christianity is Christianity by the redemption which distinguishes it historically from mere manifestation, mentally from mere illumination, and morally from mere amelioration.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Remembering Calvary (230).

In one of the old-fashioned mansions in the United States, there is still to be seen a brass-bound clock upon the staircase landing with the hands fixed at the minute and hour when Washington died. The grandfather of the present owner was a pall-bearer at the funeral of the great republican, and set the hands where they have ever since remained.

Vicarious Suffering (231).

Schamyl, a religious leader and patriot amongst a people gathered around the foot of the Caucasus, found a great deal of bribery and forgery amongst his people, and he decreed that the first one found guilty must suffer a hundred lashes. The first one convicted was his

own mother. He locked himself up for a day in prayer, and at last came forward and told the executioner that the punishment must be inflicted. His mother was brought forward, and when five lashes had been administered he sprang forward and cried, "Halt!" and took the other ninety-five upon his own bared back. Righteousness must be vindicated. How is God to vindicate righteousness while he loves man? The answer to that is the coming of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Christ was the vindication of the righteousness of God.—John Douglass Adam.

"He Saved Us" (232).

In a little village in Germany there stands a plain marble shaft in the central square. On it is the name, Heinrich Hartman, the sentence, "He saved us," and under it the names of twelve children. He was a blacksmith, a great favorite of the children. One day as the twelve came down the road, a mad dog came rushing toward them. The blacksmith saw it, and taking an iron bar ran out to stop it. He killed the dog, but not before it had bitten him. The children were safe, but the man died in awful agonies. Though many years have passed, still their children and children's children decorate the monument. Now Christ died for you and me; and he died not because we loved him, but because he loved us, and to show how anxious he is to have us love him. —Selected.

The Cross at the Center (233).

There is a certain town in Europe, which has, in its center, a lofty marble building in the form of a cross. All the streets of this town radiate from this building, and, at whatever point you pause in walking through them, if you look back, you get a view of the cruciform pile in the midst. Denominations should be like the streets of this town. Every creed should radiate from the Cross of Christ, every avenue of service partake of its sacrificial love, and every member of every church draw his power from the dear and blessed One whose death upon that cross redeemed us all. This is the ideal. God help us in our efforts to live up to it.

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory" (234).

When the hardy Portuguese colonists, following the trail of the exploring Vasco da Gama, first settled Macao on the coast of South China, one of the early buildings they erected was a massive cathedral on a hill crest with a splendid approach of stone steps. But a violent China Sea typhoon proved too severe a test for even the ugly massiveness of the great building, and three centuries ago the cathedral fell, all save the front wall. It has never been rebuilt, and that ponderous facade has stood as a sort of mournful monument ever since. On the top of this facade stands a great bronze cross, clean cut against the sky, defying rain and lightning and typhoon. It is a striking thing to see; and when Sir John Bowring—then governor of Hongkong—visited Macao in 1825, he was impressed by that cross surmounting the ruined church.

The significance of that mighty cross as seen by this man of God inspired the famous hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory, Towering O'er the Wrecks of Time." Since that day thousands of visitors have looked upon the ruin, and the cross that glorifies the ruin; some with in-

difference, some with curiosity, some with reverence, but few have known that the splendid hymn sung by the world-circling Church of God for nearly ninety years, was born in the mind of the British Governor of Hongkong by the sight of the same cross that stands today "towering o'er the wrecks of time." As you sing this hymn, think of a great ruined wall on a misty hill-top; birds nesting on its hideous gargoyles, the sea and the mountains and the sky of China seen through its gaping doors and windows, and over all the Cross, changing desolation to majesty.

Sir John has gone to taste those "joys that through all time abide," but his hymn remains; the builders of that distant cathedral are long since forgotten, but the cross they reared there in memory of the Crucified One remains. And time has seen mightier wrecks than a cathedral. The monarchy that built it has gone; the priesthood that burned incense within it has been driven from the colony forever; and the iron dynasty that ruled those Chinese hills beyond the bay has crumbled as did the church of stone. But the cross, it stands. And the light of that sacred story that gathers round the sublime head of the cross is bringing liberty and light and life to Portuguese and Chinese; and in these days of ours we begin to catch the vision of that radiant day when all men shall know the story of the Cross and from the heart shall worship the Christ of the Cross and of the Throne.—Rev. Francis E. Wilber.

A Hero's Sacrifice (235).

The following is a true story, the record of which is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The tower of St. Leonard's Church, Bridgenorth, was left open, and two boys, wandering in, were tempted to mount up into the upper part and scramble from beam to beam. All at once a joist gave way. The beam on which they were standing became displaced. The elder boy had just time to grasp it when falling, while the younger, slipping over his body, caught hold of his comrade's legs. In this fearful position the poor lads hung, crying vainly for help, for no one was near. At length the boy clinging to the beam became exhausted. He could no longer support the double weight. He called out to the lad below that they were both "done for." "Could you save yourself if I were to loose my hold of you?" replied the younger lad. "I think I could," returned the elder boy. "Then good-bye, and God bless you!" cried the little fellow, loosing his hold. Another second and he was dashed to pieces on the stone floor below, as his companion clambered to a place of safety.—Sunday School Chronicle.

Nothing Less Would Do (236).

A minister who was practically a Unitarian in his belief and preaching was called in to see a poor sinful woman who was dying. He told her of the beautiful life, the loving ministries, and the noble example of Jesus. He urged her to follow him, but she shook her head hopelessly, saying: "That's not for the like o' me; I'm a sinful woman, and I'm dying." "It flashed upon me," said the preacher, "that I had no message of help and hope for that dying woman, and like lightning I leaped in mind and heart back to the gospel my mother taught me. I told her of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying on the cross that such as she might

be saved; of his blood poured out for the remission of sins, and all the blessed truths of the old, old story, and she professed saving faith in the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'"

The Atoning Death (237).

If I go into a sickroom where a man is dying, and as his doctor say: "Just wait a moment," and go out and bring in a great, healthy man, and, pointing to him, say: "You are dying, but if you live, just be like this man," the sick man would feebly cry: "Oh, doctor, don't mock me, but get me well and then I will take this man for my model." If I should then sit down and read him the laws of health and tell him, if he would be strong and well, he must observe these, again he would plead: "Doctor, please get me well, and then I will try to observe those beautiful teachings, but I can't do anything until you make me well." So when I am in the humiliation and helplessness where a sense of my sin puts me, the thing above all else I don't want is an example. After I am saved I will need that. While I am stung through and through with the experience of sin, to preach to me of the beautiful teaching of Christ is but to aggravate the sore in my soul. I then want a Saviour, not an example; I want salvation, not rebuke. I want a gospel brought down to the level of my hopelessness. I want a Saviour with the print of the nails in his hands and of the wound in his side.—John B. Worrell, D.D.

One for Many (238).

During a plague in Marseilles, the physicians decided that nothing could be done to save the people, unless a victim could be dissected, and the nature of the disease learned. But who would this be? Dr. Guyon rose and said he would do it. He wrote his will, bade his family farewell, entered the hospital, made the dissection and examination, wrote out the results, and in a few hours was dead. But now the physicians could treat this disease, and the plague was stayed. That was done in the spirit of Christ.

XXIX. THE GREAT INVITATION.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. . . . Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."—Isa. 55:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. John T. McFarland, D.D., in speaking of Christ's attitude towards sinners, said:

How very difficult it is for us to catch the spirit of Jesus toward sinners—difficult, indeed, for us to understand what his spirit was.

I. There was in him no morbid, curious interest in sin. That kind of interest, in some degree, is in most people. Moral monstrosities have a sort of fascination for many minds. That gives drawing power to the "Chamber of Horrors," in which a show is made of crime and criminals. That is why people go "slumming" in the criminal districts of great cities. We are curious to look on moral abnormalities. There was nothing of that in Jesus. We can not think of him looking upon the "seamy side of life" as a curious spectacle.

II. Jesus did not shrink from sinners. That disposition is more difficult for us to overcome than a morbid curiosity in sin. We have a repugnance for sinners of the grosser types. We recoil from the touch of a murderer's hand, we experience a loathing for the morally vile that makes our flesh creep if we come in contact with them. There is no evidence that Jesus had any such feelings. He accepted invitations to dine with publicans and sinners, and sat down among them with perfect ease. A Pharisee's gorge would have risen at it. It was something that Pharisees could not understand in Jesus. They inferred that he was himself a sinner; else he could not have endured the company of sinners. Or, as in the case of the woman, in the house of Simon, who washed Christ's feet with her tears, they concluded that he did not know her character, and so could not be a prophet. But Jesus never recoiled from any sinner. He feared no contamination from the touch of any human being. There was this moral significance in the way he dealt with the physically diseased. Almost invariably he put forth his hand and touched those whom he healed, even though they were lepers, whom all men loathed and shunned. Bodily maladies, in Christ's sight, were always types of spiritual disease. How can we explain this spirit of Christ? Only partially, perhaps, if at all. But he understood sin as we do not. He evidently did not view certain forms of sin as odious and loathsome and other forms as tolerable.

III. His spirit toward sinners was always benevolent. Love drew him toward them. His mission in the world was to them. Disgust and repugnance and loathing would have driven him from them. He pitied sinners as he pitied sick folks; and pity and sympathy, not aversion and contempt, bring sinners to repentance. And Jesus had faith in the possibilities in sinners. Underneath what they were he saw what they were capable of becoming. The Pharisee saw in Magdalene the polluted woman; Jesus saw in her the lustrous saint.

I. The ground of forgiveness. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin." No forgiveness except at the cross. The life surrendered at Calvary atones for sin, brings purity and peace.

II. The condition of forgiveness. "Every one that setteth his heart to seek God," or, "him that setteth his whole heart." Truly a fault is not effaced because we reproach ourselves with it; it is effaced only when we set our whole heart to seek the Divine mercy and strength.

III. The sign of forgiveness. The proof of pardon is the inspiration that cures us of our old sins. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." The proof of the former is found in the latter.

IV. The blessedness of forgiveness. Brass bands are enough to express earthly joy; all the golden bands of heaven are insufficient to express the gladness of those whose sin is forgiven, whose iniquity is covered.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

God Seeking Man (239).

Almost all the ethnic faiths are concerned with the quest of man after God. When one turns to Christianity, this is changed. It is not man seeking God but God seeking man. It begins with God being born into our humanity through Christ, that he might find it and draw it to himself. "I am come to seek and to save that which is lost." "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" The gospel message is not that man can find God if he will only seek. It is that God seeks man.—Rev. Frederick Lynch.

A Great Text (240).

A young man felt "called to preach," and gave out his text, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He could get no farther; all that he intended to say went from him, and all that he could do was to repeat the above Scripture, which he did again and again, with quivering lip, in trembling tones, and the tears running down his cheeks. At last he managed to say, "Friends, I thought I could preach, but I can not. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.'" The Holy Spirit so carried that Scripture home that many in that congregation were moved to tears, and all felt the power of the truth.—Selected.

Come (241).

An interested listener said to Mr. Moody, "One might think that the word 'Come' was your pet text." "I have two; one is 'Come' and the other is 'Go,'" was his answer. "Come for cleansing and acceptance. Go into service. Go and get others to come."

Free Grace (242).

The governor of a State would, no doubt, be glad to set free every condemned man in the penitentiary, but he dare not. It would cost too much. Such mercy would destroy the peace of the State and render government of none effect.

God does not disregard justice, and yet he is merciful. His mercy is full and free, but it cost more than we can think. His mercy burst

through every barrier and reached the lowest sinner. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—Selected.

Another Chance (243).

What will you say to the man who has failed in moral life? Answer him as Napoleon is said to have answered one of his marshals. The marshal rode up and said, "General, I fear the battle is lost." Napoleon coolly looked at his watch and replied: "Time for another battle. Summon the army to a fresh charge."—The Optimist's Good Night.

How to Come (244).

Samuel H. Hadley of the Water Street Mission in New York, said that one day after a long debauch, and with several indictments for crime threatening him, he found himself sitting on the top of a liquor barrel in a saloon. In his dazed condition he fell into a mood almost of despair. All at once, however, there came floating to his brain a remembrance of the Cross of Calvary, and the Saviour who hung on it. He felt strangely roused to try and go to that cross. Suiting his action to his materialized thought he climbed down from the barrel to "go" as he said "to the cross." But as he did so, he fell headlong to the floor. "But," said Mr. Hadley, "I fell toward the cross, and Jesus picked me up."

Room for Failures (245).

"His great establishment is made up of failures," laughed a man who was describing one of the largest and most successful mercantile establishments in a great city. "That is, it is made up of men who have started in business for themselves and failed, though they are experts in their own particular lines. Knowing how to manage a special line of work is one thing, and knowing how to manage all the details of a business is quite another." And so this man with the fine business ability has gathered to his aid these others, each an adept in his own department, and out of the combination has come the great mercantile house that is known throughout the nation. The failures, fitted into their proper places, become a success. Something of that kind is true in the universe-wide enterprise that the Creator holds in his hands.—Forward.

Call of the Larger Life (246).

Rev. John McNeill tells of a friend who had kept an eagle confined in a hen-house. He caught it when it was young, and had brought it up, as far as he could, like a domestic fowl. Having to leave the country he decided that he would set the eagle free. He opened the place in which it had been kept, and brought it to the back yard. How the eagle was astonished! It walked about, feeling as if this were rather bigger than its ordinary run; but that was all. The man was disappointed, and, taking the big bird in his arms, he lifted it and set it up on his garden wall. It turned and looked down at him! The sun had been obscured behind a cloud, but just then the cloud passed away, and the bright, warm beams poured out. The eagle lifted its eyes. Pulling itself up, it lifted one wing and stretched it out—and then lifted the

other wing—and outstretched it. Then it gave a scream, and soon was a vanishing speck away in the blue of heaven. The eagle had had no choice of its home; but we have. Living in a hen-house when we might soar in the heavenly places! Living in a hovel when we might rule from a palace! Let us seek a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that we may know what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.—Pacific Baptist.

Hope for the Hopeless (247).

The brother of Whitefield, the great evangelist, was deeply despondent at times, and felt his utter worthlessness and helplessness. On such an occasion Lady Huntingdon availed herself of the opportunity to speak with him about his soul's salvation, and tried to induce him to come to Christ. To all her pleas he answered, "Oh, it is of no use! I am lost! I am lost!" "Thank God for that!" said she. "Why?" asked the man in astonishment. "Because," said Lady Huntingdon, "Christ came to save the lost, and if you are lost, he is just the one that can save you."—The Classmate.

The Voice of Conscience (248).

Conscience has a voice and can speak. A thousand books have been written to explain this voice, but the sum of them all is, that conscience is the whisper of God in the soul of man. It is as if the youth ever heard one bidding him remember the all-seeing eye, the all-hearing ear, and the books of judgment that recall all deeds. For pain does not more certainly follow a wound than does conscience condemn a wrong. God hath not left himself without a witness in any human heart. If so-called heathen peoples have no temple, nor teacher, nor book, day by day and night by night, through all the rolling years, they do have the voice of conscience. In the hour of temptation the voice whispers warning and alarm, in the hour of yielding and fall, conscience brings condemnation and stern punishment. "The evil doer needs no dungeon, no scourge, no executioner's sword; for conscience, that dread avenger, is ever with him." If he persists, and scoffs at everything that makes for love, conscience still pleads, but, alas, the time will come when conscience will be seared by sin as by a red-hot iron. So long as there is the faintest whisper, there is hope. If thou dost but catch the tremor of the whispered note of reproof, then thank God. Hope is still yours, and still there is room and opportunity. Remember that when conscience speaks, it is God speaking. If you go away having made no vows to God, having postponed your acceptance of him, having kept silence, all the warnings of conscience, all the pleas of the whisper of God in the soul of man, will have been for naught. And when conscience speaks for the last time, this will be her word, "It has all been in vain."—Hillis.

XXX. THE DIVINE GUARANTEE.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—Isa. 55:11.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Josiah Sibley, in preaching on God in history, said:

The purposes of God are interwoven with the records of human history.

All industrial life, all social organizations, all political systems, ethical movements, all intellectual achievements are pulsing witnesses to the struggle of mankind to the one far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves. Time and again trivial events, lone men turn the destiny of nations, the movements of society. The deeply pondering men have seen in these events the guiding hand of God. That was the daring conception of the old Hebrew prophet in the time of Israel's exile. Seeing the all-powerful Cyrus establish a new kingdom, he saw in him the unwitting instrument of God in restoring his people to their native land. So a little later might the same prophet tongue have greeted the conquering Alexander as the chosen of God, decreeing that not Oriental despotism and sluggishness, but Western individualism and alertness should settle the destiny of Europe.

Again and again the same principle illustrates itself in the unrolling of the centuries. At critical moments in unsuspected manner is God seen girding the affairs of men. We cannot wonder that Charles Kingsley said, when contemplating the remarkable movement of the wild tribes of Europe against Rome: "And now, gentlemen, was this vast campaign fought without a general? If Trafalgar could not be won without the mind of a Nelson, or Waterloo without the mind of a Wellington. was there no one to lead these invincible armies on whose success depended the future of the whole human race? Did no one marshal them in that impregnable convex form from the Euxine in the North Sea? No one to guide them to the great strategic centers of the Black Forest and Trieste? No one to cause them—blind barbarians without maps or science—to follow those rules of war without which victory in protracted struggle is impossible; and by the pressure of the Huns behind, force on their flagging myriads which their simplicity once fancied beyond the power of mortal man? Believe it who will, I cannot.

"Shall I not believe that though this great war had no general upon earth, it may have had a general in heaven, and that in spite of all their sins the hosts of our forefathers were the hosts of God?"

The capture of Constantinople in 1453 by the Turks seemed the death knell of Europe, but rather was it its new birth, for the scholars fleeing thence carried seeds of culture that soon made all Italy and France and Spain and England alive with the Renaissance and the Reformation. For his own gratification and love of power Henry VIII defied the Pope, but he was none the less an agent in freeing England from Romish domination. Our fathers came to Plymouth Rock for their own way

of worship, and to Jamestown for opportunity of better living; both were inseparably bound up with the forming of a new nation, but they knew it not. A generation ago a great war was fought for the preservation of the Union, incidentally, under God, it was the means of freeing millions of human beings from slavery. A Boxer uprising in China in 1900, as an ignorant protest against western civilization, becomes the means of witnessing the Christian devotedness even unto death of thousands of Chinamen, and of bringing China into such vital contact with western powers that within a single decade she makes more innovations than in the previous millennium. The unprecedented increase of wealth in the hands of a few and the resultant monopoly of the necessities of life has been hard on the masses, but the very centralization is teaching the practicability of universal co-operation, so that the day of industrial democracy is being unsuspectingly ushered in by antithetic individualism. Selfish corruption in politics has unwittingly rung the death-knell of bossism through an awakened civic responsibility. The abolishment of war and the day of universal peace among the nations is being unexpectedly hastened by the very gigantic cost of military and naval armament.

* * *

Bishop William F. Anderson, in presenting the claims of "Christ, the True Optimist," says:

I. What a source of strength it would be to the Church if it could only fully realize that God is consummating his high purposes as surely as time speeds onward. How happens it that we do not see this more clearly? It is largely because we do not view the factors in the case with sufficient comprehensiveness. We do not take the long look backward through all the centuries as we should. Judgments based on a few events or on the facts of a few years are not trustworthy.

II. A careful study of the history of all the Christian centuries will clearly reveal the fact that—

"Through the ages one increasing purpose runs."

Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution" introduce us to the long look into history. The former extends over more than a thousand years. And we read clearly between the lines penned by its author that "there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

If we did but recognize the fact, the centuries, as they have fallen "like grains of sand" from the hand of the Great Creator, have rendered their final verdict concerning some very important questions. The question of infanticide is settled forever, so is that of the compulsory degradation of woman as a mere chattel, as is also the question of human slavery.

III. The Christian sentiment of our own times is crystallizing for the formulation of its sentence of condemnation upon other great public evils. Some day we shall hear a righteous, scathing, and final verdict upon the shameless inquities of inordinate greed, of the organized crimes of vice and intemperance, and of selfishness in all its varied forms. Some day, too, we shall have a final manifesto in regard to the

unreasonableness and inhumanity of war between man and man. Nor is faith disturbed in the least, in the utterance of these sentiments by roar of cannon and flash of bayonet from across the seas.

The violation of the law of right meets its penalty as inevitably in history as in nature. The same God presides over both realms and fully vindicates himself in each. Human shortsightedness may boast for a time that God is with the force whose armament is strongest; but the divine drift of the ages teaches us the wiser lesson, that that force is strongest which has God and right for its armament.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Bible's Influence on Human Life (249).

The influence of the Bible on human life is strikingly told by President Woodrow Wilson in the following words: "The opinion of the Bible bred in me, not only by the teaching of my home when I was a boy, but also by every turn and experience of my life and every step of study, is that it is the one supreme source of revelation, the revelation of the meaning of life, the nature of God, and the spiritual nature and needs of men. It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation. If men could but be made to know it intimately and for what it really is, we should have secured both individual and social regeneration."—Christian Observer.

The Revolutionizing Influence of Christianity (250).

Once when Ingersoll lectured in Pittsburgh, there lived there a lawyer who had been his schoolmate. The latter although starting in life with brilliant prospects, a fine practice, a happy home, fell into temptation and became a sot. His business was ruined and his home broken up. In New York a slum worker found him in the gutter, led him to Christ, and he had regained his former place, with a reunited family and a thriving business. When he read in the newspapers that Mr. Ingersoll was to speak, he wrote him a little note something like this:

"My Dear Old Friend: I see that tonight you are going to deliver a lecture against Christianity and the Bible. Perhaps you know some of my history since we parted, perhaps you know that I disgraced my home and family, and all that a man can hold dear in this world.

You may know that I went down and down until I was a poor, despised outcast, and when I thought there was none to help and none to save, there came one in the name of Jesus, who told me of his power to help, and his loving kindness and his tender sympathy, and through the story of the Cross of Christ I turned to him. I brought my wife back to my home and gathered my children together again, and we are happy now and I am doing what good I can.

"And now, old friend, would you stand tonight before the people of Pittsburgh, and tell them what you have to say against the religion that will come down to the lowest depths of hell and find me and help me up and make my wife happy, and clothe my children, and give me back my home and friends—will you tell them what you have to say against a religion like that?"

Mr. Ingersoll read the letter before his audience, and he said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have nothing to say against a religion that will do this for a man. I am here to talk about a religion which is being preached by the preachers."

The Vitalizing Power of God's Truth (251).

The life filled with the spirit of God is a minister of vitality. Wherever the figure of the river is used in the Scriptures it always implies the carriage and the impartation of life. "The river of water of life," "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." Those who are in communion with the Holy Spirit are the antagonists of death, and convey the life-giving powers of the eternal God.

First of all, they will vitalize dead organizations. There is nothing more burdensome than an organization bereft of life. There is nothing more inert than machinery divorced from energy. The church is cumbered by dead and dormant institutions. Everywhere there is the incubus of institutionalism that has no inherent vitality. Now the disciples of the Lord Jesus are to bring the needful life. Their influence is to be that of a river upon a mill wheel. It changes the inactivity of death into beneficent motion, and things that were only impediments become ministers of progress.

And the disciples of Christ are also to vitalize dead dispositions. Everywhere in human life there are withered and withering things which need to be quickened. In some lives hopes are drooping like spring blossoms that have been nipped by the frost. In other lives desires are fading and are like plants that are suffering from thirst. And again in other lives the affections are ailing, and their strength is lapsing into perilous weakness. If we could only look into the secret places of the souls of men we should be amazed in how many lives there is the touch of death.

Now the friends of the Lord Jesus are to move about among these drooping people like "rivers of water of life." The withered heart is to be thrilled by our presence. The drooping faculty is to lift itself up in new strength by reason of the influence of our lives.—J. H. Jowett, D.D.

Omnipotence, Omniscience (252).

In this doctrine of God's omnipotence we find the assurance of deliverance from all our distresses. If we cannot believe that the good must ultimately triumph over the evil, if we are not confident of the coming of the Kingdom, then life is a great blinding mockery. As we do become convinced of the power of God to work his sovereign will, we look forward to the future with hope and confidence.

Together with the thought of omnipotence goes that of omniscience.

A man in London writes to his friend in Alaska. They are on opposite sides of the earth, the one in the heart of civilization, the other in the midst of a wilderness, but the same sun and moon shine upon them both, and both live in the presence of God.

God's omniscience banishes loneliness.

The final attribute of sovereignty which the Jews saw in the great King was that of the righteous judge. These people had a deep sense of personal responsibility. They knew that they would be held responsible for their lives and that they would be judged righteously.

We recognize this judgment in the natural order. If a man puts his finger on a red-hot stove he gets burned. Just so it is in the moral order. Watch any crowd of people and see the despair, the coarseness, and the unrest written upon some of the faces by lives of sin, and doubt, if you can, the judgment of God. "Be not deceived, God cannot be mocked." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."—Rev. M. R. Boynton.

A Mighty Force (253).

One of the most remarkable exhibitions of plant force I ever saw was in a Western city where I observed a species of wild sunflower forcing its way up through the asphalt pavement; the folded and compressed leaves of the plant, like a man's fist, had pushed against the hard but flexible concrete till it had bulged up and then split, and let the irrepressible plant through.

The force exerted must have been many pounds. I think it doubtful if the strongest man could have pushed his fist through such a resisting medium.

If it was not life which exerted this force, what was it? Life is a kind of explosion, and the slow continued explosions of this growing plant rent the pavement as surely as powder would have done. It is doubtful if any cultivated plant could have overcome such odds. It required the force of the untamed hairy plant of the plains to accomplish this feat.—John Burroughs, in The Atlantic.

"It is astonishing how a single Gospel truth, honestly and warmly held, takes possession of our whole being and influences the whole life. A lichen is minute and frail, yet it will corrode quartz, pulverize the hardest rocks. So get a very fragment of Christ's truth into the soul, and it subdues the powers of evil, brings forth sweet and glorious fruits of light."

A Living Power (254).

"The churches are dying out all over the land; they are struck with death." These words of a speech made by Robert Ingersoll were read in the morning newspaper by Chaplain McCabe as he was making a journey by train. At the next station the Chaplain sent this dispatch to Ingersoll: "Dear Robert! All hail the power of Jesus' name. We are building more than one Methodist church for every day in the year, and propose to make it two a day. C. C. McCabe."

XXXI. THE FOE WITHIN.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."—Jeremiah 17:9.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Principal Forsyth, in speaking of the depth of the evil in the heart of man and of our sense of it, said:

I. It is Christ who has graven on the world the sense of sin. It did not trouble the ancients much. They saw the ugly; they felt the ache of life. They spoke of error, and of missing the way. But sinful man has more than missed the way. He has struck his guide in the face. Sin is more than ugly, more than a deformity—it is rebellion. It is hostility. It begins by displeasing God, and ends by hating him in this life or the next.

Do not say that nobody loves the bad, that those who do so mistake it for the good, and love it as good. Is there no such thing as malevolent joy? Do not say that all evil is but the exaggeration of some good, like gluttony or indolence; that it is the excess or misplacement of something which in its place would be right. Is there no such thing as the hate of man for man, of nation for nation? Of what good thing is insolence the excess? Is there any right place for malicious hate?

II. It was Christ who unveiled the depth of the evil in the human soul, the bias to the bad, the hatred of the holy, the dread of the truth, the idolatry of self, the love of wickedness. He could not reveal God without revealing sin. And it is Christ that has sharpened our sense to feel the moral horror and insufferableness of these evil things. He has raised the standard infinitely, and deepened our guilt to correspond. The high light makes deep shadow.

To bring nome the nature and meaning of sin, Christ gave the world another thing for ever. It is Holiness. There is nothing so deep and powerful as holiness. Nothing bears so irresistibly the stamp of God. Where did we learn it? From Christ? Nay, more. In Christ. What Christ brought was not the idea of humanity, of the love of man. That was in the world before. The Stoics knew something of that high ideal. But Christ brought it as a power, as a real life. And he made it a power, not as the poet does, but as the prophet; because he brought it as God's love, as holy love. The great apologetic is a holy life. Imagine the impossible. If one Church lived exclusively on philanthropy, and another exclusively on sanctity, whose would the future be? The latter, the holy church, would have the future. For holiness means love and kindness; but love does not always mean holiness.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Hillis, in preaching on "Sin in the Heart," said: Mr. Moody once said: "I have more trouble with D. L. Moody than with anyone else."

I. All men have something of the lower nature in them. The fact is, the fight of the Christian life is to triumph over the lower nature. We must fix our thoughts upon the high things and starve to death

the lower nature by refusing to feed it. Sin in the human life feeds upon attention, and when you cease to regard sin in the life, but turn resolutely to God, the desire for sinful things passes away. There is a psychological reason for "looking unto Me all ye ends of the earth and being saved." There is a psychological as well as theological reason for "beholding the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." If our eyes are fixed upon the Christ then sin dies for want of support.

There is the same reason for keeping in good health in the religious sense that there is in the physical. Here are two men living in the same locality where typhoid germs are prevalent. Both men mix and mingle with the germs. One is attacked by the disease while the other is not affected in the least. Why? In the one case the one has strength to neutralize the work of the germs and in the other case the man has no power to resist them. Many a young man falls on Saturday night because he has not kept himself in the love of God during the week. He lacks spiritual strength. The temptation of Jesus was greater because it came at a time when he was the weakest physically.

II. It is folly to dally with sin. Robert Louis Stevenson has given us an illustration of this conflict and the penalty for playing with sin. Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde represent the higher and the lower nature. Dr. Jekyl, the better self, was a scholar, a gentleman and a physician of an enviable reputation in his community. But he began to experiment with his lower self, Mr. Hyde, and on that plane of consciousness committed the worst sort of crimes. He would then pass back to Dr. Jekyl. He did it as an experiment. All sin is an experiment with the wrong elements. Adam and Eve experimented to their sorrow in the Garden of Eden. The time came when Mr. Hyde was not able to transform himself into his better self. He reached the point where the higher nature became the slave to the lower nature. It was this which led to total depravity.

III. What is total depravity? Total depravity is the lower nature triumphing over the higher nature. It is the worst nature expelling the best from the ruling power in one's life. I knelt beside the form of a drunken outcast in the Hadley Mission one night, and told him of a better life and the fruits of the Spirit. I shall never forget how the fellow looked up into my face and said, "You are right, but that is for the other fellow, but not for me." The life had been lived so long on the animal plane of consciousness that he was unable to will to lead a better life. Is there hope for such as he?

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Little Foxes (255).

The ground squirrel of the Pacific Coast destroys more wealth year by year than all the forest fires of North America, and the boll weevil exacts a heavier toll of the South than the floods of the Mississippi. Grasshoppers are worse than cyclones. The "cutworm" is deadlier than hail-stones. Freezing destroys an occasional fruit crop, but, except for unrelenting war, the codling moth and San Jose scale miss none. It is even so in the eternal interests of our lives. More wreck and ruin

are wrought by the little foxes of ill-disposition than by the roaring lions of outbreaking sin.—The Christian Evangelist.

Sin's Deceitful Promises (256).

Sin never satisfies. It does not keep its promise. Sin and salt water are alike—both appear to relieve, but really create thirst. Sane shipwrecked men do not drink ocean water. As Coleridge says in Ancient Mariner: "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink." The more one indulges in any sin the greater demand is made for more. Habit grows by what it feeds on.

Sin is misplaced confidence. Youths and maidens believe wrong-doing brings peace and pleasure. Novels make bad people prosper, but Shakespeare follows every sin to its nemesis. Young people sink their teeth in apples of Sodom, only to find them full of ashes. He who bids good-bye to his conscience will realize, some day, his error and cry for its return. Strangers place confidence in a "confidence" man and lose money; inexperienced people confide in sin and soon discover happiness and self-respect have fled.—Pacific.

Sin's Disguises (257).

I answered a call at the door. On the steps was a man, the very picture of sin, unshaven, ragged, and dirty; holes in his hat, elbows, knees of his trousers, and shoes—his feet on the ground. Wretched-looking creature!

He called me by name and wanted to come in. How could I let him? He was a perfect stranger to me, and, being frightened by his coarse looks, I shut the door.

About the same hour the next day the ringing of the bell brought me again to the door. A perfect gentleman, in appearance (high silk hat, Prince Albert coat, diamond ring, gold-headed cane), accosted me. He also appeared to know me. "Come in," I said. We were seated in the parlor but a few minutes when he succeeded in interesting me in a money scheme in which I was to get rich quickly, if I ventured. I was about to pay over the ten dollars which was to make me a member of the concern when the bell rang. Excusing myself I went to the door with the note in my hand.

At the door was the detective looking for the veneered scamp in the parlor. I admitted him, and the secret was out—"Sin appeared sin."

The man in fine clothes was the fellow in rags the day before. He had stolen the clothes, ring, and cane, and by them deceived me.—S. J. Nicholls, D.D.

The Subtle Power of Evil (258).

Last fall in going into the oil country, a well-to-do family occupied the adjoining car-seats. They were returning from the clover-scented air of the White Hills. To the ordinary mortal the odor of petroleum as he enters the oil-belt, is far from alluring. But to those to the manor born it is sometimes pleasant. As the first whiffs from the great kerosene tanks gave notice of entrance to the oil regions, the young hopeful of the family sprung up in his seat, clapped his hands, and shouted, "How good it smells!" Manty betray a similar fascination over the slimy oils pressed from crime seed, which feed the flambeaux that

form so sensational a feature in the life of our modern Vanity Fair.—Rev. Samuel G. Clark.

Sin's Treachery (258a).

During the last year or two there has been an extraordinary number of Alpine accidents, and in several instances they arose from a disregard of the danger of a grass slope. The inexperienced mountaineer thinks that a grass slope must be safe, and setting his foot on the inviting green discovers that it is every bit as dangerous as the ice, if it be steep and terminate in a precipice. The short Alpine grass is remarkably slippery, and many a tourist who has safely traveled over rock and glacier has fallen a victim to the treacherous slope where the verdant patch and mountain flower tempt the climber. We are comparatively safe when a thing is nakedly evil and the situation confessedly dangerous, but the green slope lures us to our doom.—Watkinson.

Spiritual Suicide (259).

Some men are lost by the force of their own passions. 1, as Balaam was by love of gold; 2, as Saul was by self-will ending in jealousy, and pride darkened into madness; 3, as Haman was by envy indulged and brooded on; 4, as the harlots were, through feelings pure and high at first, inverted and perverted; 5, as Judas was by secret dishonesty, undetected in its first beginnings—the worst misfortune that can befall a tendency to false life.—Robertson.

From Within Out (260).

Thoughts are the parents of character. Character is what a man is; reputation is what he passes for. Does the world think well of a man? That is his reputation; and it is a reputation worth contending for. Is he clean and white through and through, as fair inside as out, his heart of the same color as his life, the core of his being healthy, clean, and sweet? That is his character; and it is of the very best.

An essayist reminds us: "There is an inner world of sin. There the ambitious can surround himself with the images of a power and splendor he can never attain. There a feeble hatred can exchange its pointless pen and blunted sarcasms for epigrams which make an enemy's face blanch and his nerves quiver. There the voluptuary can scent the bouquet of the wine of sin, without the vulgarities and disappointments which are the portion of those who drain the cup to the burning lees."

Must a man be a liar to be untrue? Must he be a roue to be impure? Must he be caught red-handed to be cruel and vindictive? Nay. Thoughts make the man. Habitual thinking determines the character. Thoughts "originate in the life-cells of our being," according to the dictum of science, and are our truest issue and revelation. And thoughts may be as fatal as crime to the development of a lofty manhood. Regulate your thoughts, and you regulate the discretion and the measure of your growth. Think of sinful gains and sinful pleasures, and your character will lose its warmth and color. Think of duty, righteousness, and God, think of whatsoever things are honest, lovely, and of good report, and the beauty of holiness will be reflected in your face.—J. Sanders Reed, D.D.

XXXII. THE SUCCESS THAT IS FAILURE.

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness."—Jeremiah 22:13.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I.. Building by unrighteous trade—Varying forms of fraud.

II. Building by oppression of employees. The right law of hiring—prompt and frequent payment of the laborer's wages; a living wage; fair distribution of profits.

III. Building by unjust administration of laws. Favoring the rich—"The law's delay."

IV. Woe unto him—The doom of oppression and unjust governments or corporations.—The lesson of the French Revolution.

Plato said that a man not paid when his wages were due should receive double pay. Employers too often forget how a great part of the poor live, as the saying is, "from hand to mouth," so that the failure to get what is due at the time appointed is often a sore trial. This forces them to buy on credit, which increases the expense of their living.—Kellogg.

"The destruction of the poor is their poverty."

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

* * *

Crooked Business Methods.

If I were a Christian business man I would be a Christian first and a business man afterward.

I would not be satisfied with the business standards and ideals of the world around me.

I would not offer goods at cost and then figure in a "living profit."

I would not put a sham estimate of value on goods now on the bar gain list.

I would not advertise a twenty-dollar suit for fifteen, when it cost twelve and never sold for more than sixteen.

I would not sell new, second-class goods as "slightly shopworn," just to make them appear to be a bargain.

I would not sell any article to whose use I am morally opposed.

I would endeavor to enlist the co-operation of other merchants and the citizens in securing a sensible closing hour.

I would try to keep business from side-tracking religion.

I would not encourage any superstitious deference to my opinions simply because I am a "business man." Men of all other pursuits have some intelligence.

I would not encourage the legalizing of wrong, even if I believed it "helped business."

I would do all in my power to introduce good business methods into the affairs of the Church.

I would not claim the right to "sell whatever the people want." Do not even the saloonkeepers the same?

I would pay my help what they earned and deserved, but would not

consider it my duty to run a charitable institution for the benefit of incompetent, gum-chewing gossips and idlers.

I would insist that neither dealers nor customers should be toadies or flunkies.

I would not try to build up a separate class, but would unite with all clear-headed, good-hearted people who are laboring to bring about the "new earth" seen by the last of the prophets, and hoped and struggled for by all true Christians since his day.—Jeshurun, in Western Christian Advocate.

In preaching on "The Mammon of Unrighteousness," Dr. David James Burrell said: The word "mammon" here means money. It is properly called the mammon of unrighteousness because it is all "tainted" with the germs of sinful traffic. It passes through the hands of drabs and drunkards, thieves, gamblers and sinners of every sort.

It is lawful currency, nevertheless; and as such must be used by God's people for the betterment of their fellow men. What a splendid thing it would be if one of our multi-millionaires were to spend his possessions in relieving the necessities of the poor! How many friends he would make by gladdening the hearts of widows and orphans and prisoners of poverty!

But these are not the friends of whom Christ was thinking when he enjoined his disciples to "make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness." His reference was to converted souls, friends on the other side, who going before should bid them welcome to the Father's house.

Here is no intimation of earning an entrance to heaven by the benevolent use of wealth or in any such way. There is not money enough in all the exchequers of this world to admit a sinner into the kingdom of God. Faith in Christ as the Saviour is the only condition of salvation; as he himself said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom God hath sent."

We are not to infer, however, that morality and benevolence have no value. Faith is the passport that opens the gates of heaven; but good works make it resplendent with light. The right use of our time, talents and possessions for the extension of the kingdom of Christ will entitle us to the service chevron in the life further on. No good deed in the Master's name, not even the putting of a cup of cold water to thirsty lips, shall fail of its reward. The apprenticeship of this life is fitting us for the higher service of the eternal life.

Our business as Christians is "to seek and to save the lost;" and our wealth, great or little, is intrusted to us with that end in view. "The mammon of unrighteousness" which we expend in the work of evangelization is making converts who will be our grateful friends forever. They are going on before; and what a welcome they will give us! The man who lives for his own salvation, thinking only of his title clear to mansions in the skies, may be saved "so as by fire;" but what a lonely heaven his will be! Let us so discharge our stewardship that when we fail a multitude of grateful souls may give us welcome into the City of God.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Rich Man (260). A tramp stood looking at a great house, where the owner lay dead. The tramp said, "I am a richer man than he is, for I am alive, and he is dead." And if the rich man did not have treasure in heaven, how poor he was!—Sunday School World.

The Business Man's Temptation (261).

There can be no doubt at all that the average business man's temptations must chiefly lie in the direction of covetousness; to exaggerate the relative value of the thing he deals with—that is money; and in consequence, to underestimate whatever cannot be appraised by that conventional standard of the market. To be safe, therefore, the young man embarking on a commercial life is bound to keep this risk of his calling before nis eyes. He must refuse to fall down and worship wealth, keeping his reverence for the good rather than for the opulent or successful; in a word, he must save himself from coming to think or act as if a man's life consisted in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. There are secondary safeguards, such as the pursuit of literature and the cultivation of a sympathizing contact with men and women in other than mere business relationships.—Selected.

Business on Christian Principles (262).

Recently the pastor of the Central Congregational Church, Atlanta, Ga., in preparing a sermon on "Religion and Business," sent a number of letters to the leading business men asking them if the principles oi Christianity were incompatible with success in business. A majority of the successful business men replied at some length, and their replies were similar in tone to the two we quote. The leading banker, Mr. Asa G. Candler, wrote: "If I thought it were not possible then I would despair of successfully doing business at all. The fundamental principle as enunciated by our Lord, of the Christian religion, is the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' Let us ignore this, and all of our business systems crumble. If I regarded not that rule I would not deal with a man who disregarded it. I regret to believe that there may be business men who are willing to disregard Christian principles themselves, but these same men hesitate to do business with men who habitually ignore the principles of the Christian religion. If this be true, a successful business life must follow the Golden Rule and the policies of Him who was God as well as man?" Mr. Frederic J. Paxon wrote: "The business of the twentieth century is not laid down on a strictly legal foundation. By this I mean that character counts 75 per cent in all transactions, against 25 per cent legal, rather than 75 per cent legal and 25 per cent moral, or a ratio of three to one in favor of character—that is, a man may be legally right, but morally wrong, and the world's question is always: Is he morally right?"—Episcopal Recorder.

Christian Business (263).

A merchant having an extensive business was in danger of financial wreck. He went to another leading business man, saying, "I am ruined, gone, unless I have help. Will you give me so much for these stocks?" "No!" "Then I am ruined!" "But I will give you ten thousand dollars

more!" When asked why he did not take the man at his offer, and make ten thousand dollars, the other's answer was: "I am a Christian, seeking to please Christ; and I could not have prayed if I had taken advantage of his distress." Such is the law of Christian business living.—C. E. World.

Unrighteous Business Methods Defeated (264).

"No," said the lawyer, "I shan't press your claim against that man; you can get someone else to take your case or you can withdraw it, just as you please."

"Think there isn't any money in it?"

"There would probably be some money in it, but it would, as you know, come from the sale of the little house the man occupies and calls home; but I don't want to meddle with the matter, anyhow."

"Got frightened out of it, eh."

"No, I wasn't frightened out of it."

"I suppose likely the old fellow begged hard to be let off."

"Well, yes, he did."

"And you caved, likely?"

"No, I didn't speak a word to him."

"What in creation did you do?"

"I believe I shed a few tears."

"And the old fellow begged you hard, you say?"

"No, I didn't say so; he didn't speak a word to me."

"Well, may I respectfully inquire whom he did address in your hearing?"

"God Almighty."

"Ah, he took to praying, did he?"

"Not for my benefit in the least. You see I found the little house easily enough and knocked at the outer door, which stood ajar. Nobody heard me, so I slipped into the hall and saw, through the crack of another door, on a bed, with her silver head way up high on the pillows, an old lady, who looked as my mother did the last time I ever saw her. And down on his knees by her side was an old white-haired man. Well, he prayed. He reminded God they were still his submissive children, mother and he; and no matter what he saw fit to bring upon them they shouldn't rebel at his will! Of course, 'twas going to be terrible hard for them to go out homeless in their old age, especially with poor mother so sick and helpless; but still they'd seen sadder things than ever that would be; nothing could be so sharp as the parting with their three sons—unless mother and he should be separated. But at last he fell to comforting himself that the dear Lord knew it was through no fault of his own, that mother and he were threatened with the loss of their dear little home, which meant beggary and the almshouse; a place they prayed to be delivered from entering if it could be consistent with God's will. And then he quoted a multitude of promises concerning the safety of those who put their trust in the Lord; yes, I should say he begged hard; in fact, it was the most thrilling plea to which I ever listened. And at last he prayed for God's blessing on those who were about to demand justice"—the lawyer sat in silence for a moment, then continued more slowly than before, "I believe I'd rather go to the poorhouse myself.

tonight, than to stain my heart and hands with the blood of such a prosecution as that."

"Little afraid to defeat the old man's prayer, eh?"

"Bless your soul, man, you could not defeat it!" roared the lawyer. "It doesn't admit of defeat! You see, I was taught that kind of thing myself in my childhood; and why I was sent to hear that prayer I'm sure I don't know, but I hand the case over."

"I wish," said the client, twisting uneasily, "you hadn't told me about the old fellow's prayer."

"Why so?"

"Well, I greatly want the money the place would bring, but was taught the Bible all straight when I was a youngster; and I'd hate to run counter to such a harangue as that you tell about. I wish you hadn't heard a word of it; and another time I wouldn't listen to petitions not intended for your ears."

The lawyer smiled.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you're wrong again; it was intended for my ears and yours, too, and God Almighty intended it. My mother used to sing about God moving in a mysterious way, I remember."

"Well, my mother used to sing it, too," said the claimant, as he twisted his claim-papers in his fingers. "You can call in, in the morning, if you like, and tell mother and him the claim has been met."

"In a mysterious way," added the lawyer, smiling.—Selected.

How Men Rob God (265).

Two men, a Christian and a skeptic, were discussing the evidences of the Christian religion. The skeptic frankly and bluntly said: "We might as well drop this matter, for I don't believe a word you say; and more than that, you yourself don't really believe it. For to my certain knowledge you have not given, the last twenty years, so much for the spread of Christianity, such as the building of churches, or for foreign and home missions as your last Durham cow cost."—C. E. World.

God's Treasures Better Than Man's (266).

When Andrew Jackson went from the presidency back to his home in Tennessee he had had wealth, he had had the highest position the nation could give to him, but there, in the privacy of retired life, he read the Bible and he sought the Lord Jesus Christ. He gave his heart to the Saviour, and went around proclaiming that of all the treasures that life had brought to him from his humble life up to the presidency, there was no treasure so valuable as the pearl of greatest possible price, the sense of God's salvation in his heart. Andrew Jackson was right about it; he died in the simplicity of faith, with his friends around his bedside, telling them that above all price was the gift of salvation, above all value the holy Book, and urging them to love God and serve him and meet him in heaven. God's treasures are better than ours.—Connell.

Christian Business Men (267).

Men are asking everywhere this question: "Is it possible for a man to be engaged in the activities of our modern life, and yet be a Christian? Is it possible for a man to be a broker, a shopkeeper, a lawyer, a

mechanic—is it possible for a man to be in a business of today and yet love his God and his fellow man as himself?" I do not know what transformations these dear businesses of yours must undergo before they shall be true and ideal homes for the child of God, but I do know that upon Christian merchants and Christian brokers and Christian lawyers and Christian men in business today there rests an awful and a beautiful responsibility to prove—if you can prove it—that these things are capable of being made divine; to prove that a man can do the work which you have been doing this morning, and will do this afternoon, and yet love his God and his fellow man as himself. If he cannot, what business have you to be doing them? If he can, what business have you to be doing them so poorly, carnally, and unspiritually that men look on them and shake their heads with doubt? It belongs to Christ in men, first, to prove that man may be a Christian and yet do business; and, in the second place, to show how a man, as he becomes a greater Christian, shall purify and lift the business which he does and make it the worthy occupation of the son of God.—Phillips Brooks.

XXXIII. THE WISDOM AND REWARDS OF THE SOUL-WINNER.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.—Daniel 12:3.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

The Soul-Winner.

1. The winner of souls works with the most precious and promising raw material—Manhood.

2. He has the greatest co-worker—Christ.

3. The results are the most remarkable—the transformation of character.

4. The rewards are the richest—the rest prepared.

* * *

Canon Wilberforce, in preaching on the Christian's obligation to the unbeliever, developed the theme as follows:

I. The heavenly citizen must first be deeply convinced of the truth of the proposition, Magna est veritas et prævalebit. In "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," his contention will be rather to persuade men than to defend God; not, Uzzah-like, to imagine that he will uphold that which is tottering. This reflection will free him from timidity as to any supposed conflict between science and revelation. "Without Him was not anything made that was made." The investigating faculty of man is the boring tool, whereby the glories of the living God are dug out of his mines, and in the reverent pursuit of natural science the thoughts of God become visible.

II. Those who know the secret of the Lord will lead the anxious doubter away from systems, controversies, and debates into the presence of the Lord himself. Philip of Bethsaida, in the history before us, illustrates the true method. He had found Jesus, had recognized in him the Christ—God's answer to the hunger and thirst of humanity; such a knowledge evidences its reality by its self-communicativeness. He rushes to his friend, without preface, argument or explanation; he says, "I have found the Christ." He knows what he has found; he can at least invite trial; he is not afraid to subject the blessed truth to the most searching analysis, the closest investigation. "Philip saith unto him, Come and see." Here is the one absolute, irrefragable Christian evidence: the power of Jesus Christ to satisfy every human instinct, to fill the heart to overflowing, to save to the uttermost, to elevate the affections, to perfect the nature, to ennoble the character, of fallen man. Inasmuch as the best sermon is a life, our life should so witness that men should be compelled to acknowledge that "the life we live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us."

* * *

Bishop J. M. Thoburn in presenting the subject of Soul-Winning emphasized the necessity for aggressiveness.

The disciple must go to those who need him; they will not come to him. Earth's highways and byways are alike filled with the neglected and perishing, and the disciple, like his Master, has a special mission to them. "As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you." Like our blessed Saviour, we too must seek and save the lost. We are ever prone to turn to those who have not gone astray, but such was not the spirit of the Master. God has in these latter days brought all the ends of the earth together, and now the earnest worker can go to almost any part of the globe without difficulty, and bring in the wanderer and the outcast to the royal feast of heaven. With hands of holy violence and yet with the voice of love and the touch of gentleness we should go after the most needy and neglected ones of earth in the assured confidence that God's blessing will follow us, and that our labors shall not be in vain. In the great banqueting house of heaven may it be ours to see some among the happy guests who shall have been gathered in by our faithful obedience to this command!

* * *

Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker said: I welcome every man who can speak one word for his Master; somebody, somewhere, wants that particular word.

George MacDonald wrote: Christians must be in the world as he was in the world; and in proportion as the truth radiates from them, the world will be able to believe in him.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Main Thing (268).

In a $1,000,000 bank a teller called to me, "Come over to my window, if you have a minute to spare; I want to tell you something good." He told me how he and some other young men of his church "stayed at the church last Saturday night till a very late hour praying for some of the young men of our neighborhood. And at the Sunday night's service five of them came out for Christ. Isn't that glorious? There is nothing like it, winning souls for him."

Indeed that was "something good." You could hardly find a busier man than this same young married man, an employee in a great bank. He considers the winning of souls the main thing in life. "Here is my pistol, and, while I carry it all the time, I've never been arrested for it," said he one day as he drew from his pistol pocket a "worker's manual," a soul winner's help.

Because you find no time for that kind of work or service, you may think there is not much of it done. But a great deal of it is done, and that by the very busiest men, men "up to the eyes in business" all day long. Often the most efficient worker in this line is the head of some great business concern, one of the "captains of industry."

One who makes this the main thing in his life will always find time for a good deal of this service. When you are looking for it, the opportunity for it meets you at every turn. Try it, and prove this for yourself.

Often you, a business or professional man, a layman, could reach an unsaved man, when your pastor could not touch him. Could all men be brought to realize that they have a personal responsibility for the salva-

tion of those about them, the "world," for which he died, would soon be brought to Christ.—Pres. Advance.

Turning Men to Christ (269).

A little tract dropped in his path by an unknown woman, resulted in the conversion of Richard Baxter, who afterward led large numbers to Christ, including Philip Doddridge, who then won others to the faith, including William Wilberforce, who, in turn, was blessed to the spiritual quickening of many, including Leigh Richmond and Thomas Chalmers, whose memory, for like reasons, is now blessed by thousands.

At a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, on the evening of May 24, 1738, one read aloud Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. In the audience was a young minister, in deep concern about religion. Through what he heard, a new light flashed into his mind; a new life stirred within him; "a strange warmth" at his heart led him to say, "The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me;" and from this work of grace in John Wesley himself came that great religious revival, the result of which today, we see in the more than twenty millions who own him as their spiritual father.

A humble, hard-working evangelist in Wales had but one convert about whom he was confident. This latter, however, was William of Wern, who is said to have brought a third of the principality to Christ.

A young Aberdeenshire girl, through hearing a missionary sermon, resolved to work for missions, and this, accordingly, she at once proceeded to do. In after times, when she had become a wife and mother, she so interested her boy in the cause of the heathen that he ultimately became an agent of the Church Missionary Society and soon afterwards was widely known as "Mackay of Uganda."—J. R. Miller, D.D.

The Personal Touch (270).

A noted evangelist was once holding a series of services in a church whose minister was a man of long experience and of great influence. One night as they sat on the platform together, the minister pointed out to the evangelist a man in the audience.

"For twelve years," he said, "I have tried to win that man to Christ. I have preached to him so long that I sometimes find myself doing it almost unconsciously."

"From the pulpit?" asked the evangelist.

"From the pulpit, yes."

"How many times have you gone to him with the love of God in your heart and said: 'I want to see you become a child of God?'"

"I must confess," said the minister, "that I have never spoken to him personally and directly concerning his salvation."

"Then," said the evangelist, "perhaps he is not impregnable after all."

That night the evangelist, after the service, caught the man before he got to the door. He spoke only a few words, but they were earnest and loving. And the next evening in the "after service," in which many souls have found lasting peace and eternal life, the man was on his knees with the tears streaming down his cheeks. It was the personal touch that did it.

The sermon is effective with many. Music has brought salvation to many a life. But in thousands and thousands of cases it is only the personal touch that wins.—William Thomas McElroy.

The Joy of the Winner (271).

While traveling down the Ohio River on a steamboat my attention was called to the pilot, who was a coarse looking man. The captain informed me that three weeks ago, as the boat was going through the rapids, the pilot called him to take the helm. He had just seen a boy struggling in the water. He sprang into the boiling waters and saved the boy. I went up to the brave man and spoke to him: "Do you ever see the boy whom you saved?" "Yes," he answered, "at every trip he comes down to the boat to see me." "And how do you feel when you see him?" "More than I can tell you," he replied. "More intense interest than in any of my own seven at home, for whom I have run no such risk."

Waiting to be Won (272).

A missionary physician in one of China's hospitals cured a man of cataract. A few weeks later forty-eight blind men from one of China's wilds, each holding on to a rope held in the hands of the man who was cured, came to him. Thus in a chain they had walked two hundred and fifty miles to the hospital, where nearly all were cured. What a pathetic procession those blind men must have made! Yet it is typical of the willingness of the world to come to a man who has something genuine to give them.—Record of Christian Work.

A Passion for Souls (273).

Has the benighted soul ever caused us as much pain as some trivial pecuniary loss has done? Have we ever felt the smart of the gaping wounds through which our brother's blood is pouring forth as much as we do the tiniest scratch on our own fingers? Does it sound to us like exaggerated rhetoric when a prophet breaks out, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep night and day!" or when an apostle in calmer tones declares, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart?" Some seeds are put to steep and swell in water, that they may be tested before sowing. The seed which we sow will not germinate unless it be saturated with our tears.—Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

The Point of Contact (274).

In Japan's recent war, the Young Men's Christian Association was anxious to be about its work, and gain a foothold among the soldiers. The permission it was able to secure was that of having, among those encamped at the front, a tent where baths, hair-cutting, and like conveniences could be furnished. A barber-shop was very far below the ideal of Christian service that the Association had in view, but it was the narrow door that opened, and there was no question as to utilizing it. The barbering was faithfully done, the bathing facilities were supplied, a table where letters could be written home and a stock of books and papers were added, and that tent became immensely popular. Its fame spread, and the Association was granted new privileges and endorsed by high authorities until it was able to go forward comparatively unhampered.—Onward.

XXXIV. OUR SURE REFUGE.

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him."—Nahum 1:7.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Frederick Lynch in commenting on "God's Deliverances," used the following hints of development:

I. Times of Danger.—It is often said that the thing Jesus did was to personalize religion. The Old Testament is a book of national deliverance, a pæan of God's redemption of a people; but the New Testament is near, intimate, personal, a story of God's friendly, confidential relations with persons. Yet the Psalms abound in the tenderest and most confident assertions of the loving-kindness of God and of instances where he has delivered the writer out of all his troubles.

Our own experience, in the times when we have been in danger, corroborates exactly these wonderful deliverances of the Psalmist. Just as we seemed about to sink, again and again the hand of God plucked us from the dark waters. It is interesting to note, in reading Professor James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," how almost every case of sudden conversion came just as the soul was on the brink of catastrophe

II. Perils Unrecognized. Our deliverances from unrecognized perils are most wonderful of all. Again and again we have been turned from some course—perhaps a course upon which our hearts were most set—and we have wondered why God thwarted us. At the time it almost seemed as if he were cruel to us. But afterwards we have seen that that was a real deliverance from a real danger; a peril unrecognized at the time but now seen.

III. Ways of Deliverance. It is helpful to remember in how many ways God works; how various are his ways of answering prayer. Neesima, who founded Doshisha in Japan, found deliverance through happening upon a copy of the Gospels, as did Augustine. Some of our prayers for deliverance God answered by sending us a friend. A great man once said in my hearing that God delivered him from evil ways by sending him a beautiful wife. Children are sometimes God's answer to prayer.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Theodore Cuyler in preaching on "Our Divine Refuge," said He who piloted the patriarch through the deluge, and fed the prophet by the brook, and supplied the widow's cruse, and watched over the imprisoned apostles, and numbers the very hairs of our heads, he has every one of us on his great, almighty heart. What fools we are to tire ourselves out and break ourselves down while such an all-powerful helper is close by our side! Suppose that a weary traveler who is trudging uphill were overtaken by a wagon whose owner kindly said to him: "My friend, you look tired; throw that knapsack into my wagon; it will rest you, and I will see that it is safe." Imagine the pedestrian eyeing him foolishly, and blurting out the churlish reply: "I can't trust you, sir; drive along!"

I'll carry my own luggage." But this is the way that tens of thousands of Christians treat God.

* * *

An old English manuscript sets forth God's friendship in the following vivid sentences:

Let me tell you how I made God's acquaintance.

I had heard much of him, but took no heed.

He sent daily gifts and presents, but I never thanked him.

He often seemed to want my friendship, but I remained cold.

I was homeless and wretched and starving and in peril every hour, and he offered me shelter and comfort and food and safety; but I was ungrateful still.

At last he crossed my path, and with tears in his eyes he besought me, saying, "Come and abide with me."

Let me tell you how he treats me now.

He supplies all my wants.

He gives me more than I dare ask.

He anticipates my every need.

He begs me to ask for more.

He never reminds me of my past ingratitude.

He never rebukes me for my past follies.

Let me tell you further what I think of him.

He is as good as he is great.

His love is as ardent as it is true.

He is as lavish of his promises as he is faithful in keeping them.

He is as jealous of my love as he is deserving of it.

I am in all things his debtor, but he bids me call him friend.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

He Meets All the Soul's Needs (275).

Once when Kipling was sick the nurse noted the moving of his lips, and asked if he wanted anything. His reply was, "I want my Father now." Does experience prove that Jesus can meet the needs of the human soul? Ask the poor lonely widow. Ask the missionary, Pitkin, on his way to be slaughtered by the Boxers, and note his words: "Tell my boy, when he is grown up, I want him to come out here and take his father's place." Ask Hugh Price Hughes, and hear him say, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want." Ask that vast host of men and women who daily without complaint, bear their burdens, doing the world's work in the strength he has given, by his peace and joy turning their sorrows into a song, and hear the reply: "We have seen him whom the Greeks sought, and have found him sufficient for every need."

Holding God's Hand (276).

I was walking on a railroad track recently when I came to a trestle —a long, high bridge over a stretch of water. Just as I reached the bridge I came upon two girls, each carrying a burden and starting over the track. I passed them when the younger said to the elder, "Oh, I am afraid to walk this trestle; hold my hand." I was in a hurry but I turned to see the little girl. The older one only laughed, so I said: "Come on, I'll lead you over," and, taking her hand, told her to look ahead and not

down, always forward; so she became calm, walked steadily at my side, and grew confidential, saying: "My father was killed on a railroad, and mother always warns me about this bridge, she is so anxious."—A. B. Milligan, D.D.

Sufficient For Me (277).

The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work. I felt weary and sore depressed, when swiftly, suddenly, as a lightning flash, came: "My grace is sufficient for thee." And I said: "I should think it is, Lord," and burst out laughing. I never fully understood what the holy laughter of Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so absurd.

It was as if some little fish, being very thirsty, was troubled about drinking the river dry; and Father Thames said: "Drink away little fish, my stream is sufficient for thee." Again, I imagined a man away up on yonder mountain saying to himself: "I fear I shall exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere." But the earth might say: "Breathe away, O man, and fill thy lungs ever; my atmosphere is sufficient for thee."

O brethren, be great believers! Little faith will bring your souls to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to you.—C. H. Spurgeon.

He Cares (278).

A lady told me recently that at a very critical moment in her life she was saved by what she has ever since regarded as a remarkable experience. She had been in deep trouble, and was thoroughly wretched. She saw nothing ahead, the night seemed starless, dark and black. In her despair she determined to end her unhappy life. She walked to a large pond in the vicinity and sat down upon the edge of it a moment to think. Then, when she was on the point of plunging in, she felt a pressure upon her shoulders from behind holding her back. No human being was near, but she is sure somebody held her back. She tried to break away from the restraint but she could not. She believes that it was God who saved her. She is now a happy and useful Christian and church member.—Ewart.

God Watching Over Us (279).

Helen Keller's mother used to lean over her little Helen's cradle, where Helen was all entombed in her little body that weighed fifty pounds, and her ears were deaf, saying: "Oh, Helen, Helen, how I love you! Oh, Helen, what your father and I would do for you! We would work our fingers to the very bone if you could only understand." The mother sobbed her love over little Helen, the dumb and blind girl, and there were not many things in the world so heartbreaking as that mother, as she held this little girl to her bosom. And yet, all the time Helen Keller was saying to herself: "Oh, if mother would only speak to me! Oh, why are mothers giving only the whisperings of their love?" Ever little Helen would say: "I wonder if I have a father and mother, and, if I have, why clouds and darkness are round about them." When she was seven years of age she began to think that fathers and mothers were only seen through a glass, darkly; and yet her father and mother were breaking their hearts trying to reveal themselves to Helen. What a symbol of God leaning over the battlements of his heaven, speaking to

us through all the summer, unrolling his will through all the procession of the seasons, giving to us his music in all its solemnity of sweet sounds.—Hillis.

Mother-love (280).

What a glorious combination: the kind Father's heart and the almighty God's power! Oh, how bright and happy and Christian a future would you picture out for your children, if you had the power to make them as good and happy as you could wish! But with human beings it is a commonplace ten thousand times repeated, how far apart are will and power. You have heard of the poor mother with her infant, who perished in a snow-storm crossing the hills on a wild winter night; there, in the dark night, and amid the waste wilderness, the mother died. They found her in the morning, cold and dead; but the little child was alive and well; for the poor mother had spent her last strength in stripping the clothing from her own stiffening frame and wrapping it about her child and clasping the little bundle to her breast. Ah, brethren, the tight clasp of the dead arms, and those poor garments, so carefully wrapped,—surely they spake from the world beyond the grave, and told the last care in the dying mother's heart; and told how her last thoughts had been with the unconscious little one that never would remember or miss her! Now there is the type of God's love; not more tenderly did the dying woman yearn over the little thing that must go through life and she far away than does God over each soul; and the grand difference lies in this, that our heavenly Father has infinite power to do all we ask or need!—Boyd.

"I Will Help Thee" (281).

A clergyman who was contemplating accepting a call to a church, being still undecided, saw on the wall of the First Congregational Church in Buffalo, the text, "Fear not, I will help thee." He got off the car and went back to read the rest of the sentence, which was, "for the Lord, thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, 'Fear not, I will help thee.'" These words came to the young minister as from the mouth of God, guiding him in an important crisis of his life.—Rev. Edwin Whittier Caswell.

XXXV. BUSINESS SUCCESS AND SOUL FAILURE.

"Will a Man Rob God?"—Malachi 3:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

A writer in Success suggested the following results of a man's succeeding in business and yet failing in all the things of most importance in life. In seeming to rob God, he, in reality, robs himself.

He was no greater than his occupation.

He never learned to look on the sunny side.

He stuffed his pocketbook but starved his brain.

He had no use for sentiment that could not be cashed.

He did not live in his upper stories, but in the basement of his being.

He regarded his business as a means of making a living instead of a life.

He never learned to enjoy little things, to see the uncommon in the common.

He never learned to lubricate his life's machinery with laughter and good cheer.

He lost his early friends by neglect, and had no time to cultivate new ones.

He made life a grind, out of which he got neither pleasure, profit nor instruction.

There was only one side of his nature developed, and that was the money-making side.

The writer might have summed it all up by saying that he refused to honor God's claims upon him and thus forfeited all the best things of life and character.

* * *

In preaching on the theme, "It Pays to Give to God," Rev. Dr. Russell H. Conwell related the following incident:

A man in Massachusetts, who had only one dollar in his pocket, and who wished to find work, went to the church and put fifty cents of that dollar in the box as an offering to God. Then with only fifty cents in his pocket, he went on hunting for work. He found an advertisement which said there were wanted laborers of his class in Marlborough, Massachusetts. At the ticket office he found that the price of a ticket to Marlborough was exactly a dollar, and that if he had the fifty cents back which he gave to the church he could have paid his fare and secured the work. Being unable to buy a through ticket, he decided to buy as far as fifty cents would go and walk the rest of the way. So he left the cars at South Framingham and started to walk to Marlborough, on the country road. He approached a gentleman to inquire the way, and the gentleman told him that there was a man who wanted help in South Framingham. He went around the block and was given a salary of five dollars a week more than the other situation offered, and he is now himself one of the wealthy men of Massachusetts. He is giving ten per cent of his income regularly to the Lord's work, and this year he has concluded to build

with his ten per cent a sixty-thousand dollar shoe factory and give the entire income of the factory to the employees.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Love's Gift Honored (282).

Justinian had determined that the sole glory of erecting the cathedral was to be his; he had desired that the materials used were to be the best that could be obtained, the best methods were to be employed in using them, and everything was to be done at the expense of the Imperial purse. Over the western entrance was to be engraven the sentence "This House to God, Justinian, Emperor, gave." On the day appointed for the consecration Emperor and Patriarch, with a glittering retinue, proceeded in solemn pomp to the cathedral. On reaching the western door Justinian stopped, amazed, for over it he beheld inscribed "This House to God, Euphrasia, Widow, gave!" The astonished Emperor angrily demanded who had dared to place such an inscription over the doorway which was to have been adorned with his own name and fame? The bewildered architects, trembling, protested their innocence in the matter, and could only suggest that the inscription must have been wrought by a miracle. Who the widow was no one could say; the very name was unknown. However, search was made, and an obscure woman of the name was discovered and dragged into the Emperor's presence. The legend has been charmingly versified by Rev. S. Baring Gould and we give its conclusion in his words:

An aged woman, tottering, weak,
With tattered dress, and thin white straying hair,
Bending upon a stick and with feet bare.
"Euphrasia," said the Monarch sternly, "speak!
Wherefore didst thou my strict commandment break;
Contributing, against my orders, to this pile?"
The widow answered simply, with faint smile,
"Sire, it was nothing, for I only threw
A little straw before the beasts which drew
The marble from the ships, before I knew
Thou would'st be angry. Sire! I had been ill
Three weary months, and on my window-sill
A little linnet perched and sang each day
So sweet, it cheered me as in bed I lay,
And filled my heart with love to Him who sent
The linnet to me; then, with full intent
To render thanks, when God did health restore,
I from a mattress pulled a little straw
And cast it to the oxen—I did nothing more."
"Look!" said Caesar; "read above that door!
Small though thy gift, it was the gift of love,
And is accepted by our King above;
And mine rejected as the gift of pride
By him who humble lived and humble died.
Widow, God grant hereafter when we meet,
I may attain a footstool at thy feet!"

—The Nineteenth Century.

Using or Withholding (283).

We did not grow our wheat fields. They are God's gift. But why? These billions spell power, but they spell responsibility also; and it is for you and me to say what use we are going to make of these golden talents which have been showered into our life. Are we going to waste them in riotous living, selfishness, and love of ease? Is it going to be written over our tombstone, "He was born a man, but he died a merchant"—manhood swallowed up by business? If we are impelled to send Jesus Christ's Gospel to all the world I say that this golden stream of money means that we can send it; we can do anything conditioned upon the power of money. Anything for the extension of the Kingdom of God that requires money, administrative capacity and ability, we can do, for we have them all.

Now then, shall we use it? Some man may say to me, "Your figures are bewildering. They are taken from the census bureau of commerce and labor in Washington. There are a lot of non-Christians in this world. Have the real Christians any of this money?" "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of life that now is as well as that which is to come," and I do not suppose the intelligent and prudent and careful and industrious members of churches of this country have failed to get some of this wealth. I know they have not. Dr. Strong, in about the year 1890, in "Our Country," estimated that there were about thirteen billions of wealth then in the hands of the Christians. I estimate on the same basis that there cannot be less than twenty or twenty-five billions in the hands of the Christian men of North America today. So we have the money.

Now, you will say to me, "You are not talking to business men, but to college students." Yes, but in a little while you will take a leading part in the commercial affairs of this nation, if I mistake not, in a very little while; and some of you will inherit a part of this money. What are you going to do with it?

Dr. Schauffler once gave a definition of money, practical and popular. He said that money is just so much of yourself; that if you hire yourself out at ten dollars to a man and he gives you ten dollars at the end of the week and you put it in your pocket, you practically have ten dollars of yourself in your pocket. That is a pretty clear-cut kind of a proposition. All the money that we spend is an expression of ourselves. With money and with brains we can multiply ourselves in every good work. Oh, what fairy tales, what wonderful changes, we could bring over the world if every one would spend money in some proportion for the good of the people.—Alfred C. Marling.

The Liberal Soul Waxes Fat (284).

Paul Gogan, of Montreal, Canada, was going down the coast of the St. Lawrence River, when he had given away all that he had to help poor people up in the woods. He was going out with a brave heart and strong hand to earn some more. As he was seeking his way he saw upon the shore two chests of gold, washed up from the ship that had been wrecked there in the days of General Montcalm. That was God's treasure, put in his hand, and he had plenty of money for his lifetime, and his children

still enjoy the fruits of it. That was God's gift put right before him—gift of gold. God does return gold a hundredfold to some who give to him.—Conwell.

A Degrading View of Life (285).

The mere piling up of wealth as an end in itself is a mistaken ideal, if it be not a sin; but it is a form of insanity which is confined to the very few. Neither do men give respect to those who make it the ruling passion of their life. In the common speech of the people, little honor is ever given to men of the Rockefeller type; they are looked upon as abnormal creatures, machine-like, soul-atrophied, hardly human. For the great majority do not need so much reiteration of the truth that "the love of money (as money) is the root of all evil," but more need to reflect upon the saying of Shaw that "money is the source of all good," of health, comfort, life itself. Most of us are in little danger of being overburdened to our soul's degradation with an excess of wealth. We are in danger of being content with too narrow a standard of life which leaves our soul with all its infinite possibilities little chance for expansion. We need a prophet in these later days, not to denounce our luxurious covetousness, but to preach a divine discontent with a life so large in its possibilities, so pitifully cramped in its expression by our too easy contentment with the social average of our surroundings. Until money ceases to be means of satisfying legitimate and praiseworthy desires, the effort to attain it will remain a worthy object for those who wish to make their lives the fullest manifestation of their inherent possibilities.—Shearsmith.

The Lesson of History (286).

And what is the lesson of history save this, Palmyra is a heap, Tyre a ruin and Ephesus a desolation. What turned the walled city into ashes? Ephesus refused to obey the law of God, and cast off all restraint, and behold! Ephesus is not. Professor Creasy tells us about the decisive battles of history. And this is the sum of his ten lectures, all races are under divine guidance; those people that listen to the voice of God advance rapidly, and those cities, like Carthage and Thebes, that refuse restraint and rebel against his guidance are brought to desolation and ruin. God has thought out in advance his plan for each city and nation, and those that rebel are cast out of the universe where God rules and guides as supreme lord and king. That nation alone shall live that accepts the guidance and obeys the laws of an over-ruling God.—Hillis.

XXXVI. GOD WITH US.

"They shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us."—Matt. 1:23.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Philip Wendell Crannell, in laying stress upon the marks of deity in Christ, said: In the analysis of Jesus we find at first the elements of pure humanity. Perhaps at first, with most of his earlier disciples, that is all we recognize; but soon we discover an unclassifiable constituent, which exerts strange and wonderful effects. He is a man, plainly. But, plainly, he is man plus. Plus what? and plus how much? Plus purity beyond all; plus the God-consciousness beyond all; plus insight; plus power; plus love; plus a self-assertion at which we cannot grow offended; plus an unconsciousness of sin that seems not blindness, but impartial self-appraisal; plus a demand for submission which we are not compelled to obey, but we cannot deny; plus—what shall we say?—something that grips us with the compelling and mastering power of a Being whose right it is to rule and rule all, and forces us down upon our knees in an ecstasy of love and adoration as though that were the place for us, and no other place could be, or be desired. And, strangely enough, the reading of the Book by a wild English mutineer, or by a Japanese who picks it up watersoaked upon his country's coast, or by a lifelong unbeliever, and these after twenty centuries, brings the same results that contact with him did with men of his day; his face appears, grows, shines, glows, burns itself into the heart, which henceforth is his forever. What is this element we find in this man? Where else in all the universe is there a quality, and a drawing, and a compulsion and a mastery like this? Only in one place. Not in man, not in angel, not in seraph—up where He sits who in love and truth and power is above all; and we exclaim with Peter, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," perfectly showing forth God's every quality.

* * *

A noted English clergyman in preaching on this text, thus enforced its great truth:

Those of you who remember your Sir Thomas Malory's King Arthur will recollect the story he tells as to the way in which Arthur was discovered and declared King of Britain. When Utherpendragon died he left apparently no heir, for Arthur, his only son by Igraine, had been smuggled away by Merlin as soon as ever he was born, and had lived in obscurity ever since. The realm therefore fell into great confusion, many of the great barons coveting the crown for themselves. Then the Archbishop of Canterbury, according to the old story, summoned all the barons and knights to London on Christmas Eve, and on Christmas Day held services for them in London's greatest church. When they emerged from church, they saw in the churchyard a great square stone, and in the midst of this stone a steel anvil, and stuck into the steel anvil by its point a naked and gleaming sword. And written on the sword in letters of gold were these words: "Whoso pulleth out this sword out of this

stone and anvil, the same is rightwise king born of England." So one after another of the great lords who covered the kingdom tugged and pulled and strained, but not one of them was able to move the sword. And then came Arthur, the unknown son of a simple knight (as people thought him), and without effort or trouble pulled the sword out of its resting-place. At Candlemas, at Easter, and at Pentecost the process was repeated. Barons and knights came from far and near to try their strength upon that sword; but none prevailed save Arthur, and he always pulled it out easily. And then the people recognized that in the man whose hand was mighty enough to draw Excalibur from its sheath and wield it with consummate ease the King of England had been found.

If I may use that old story to illustrate my present theme, this great and majestic name of Immanuel became the test which was applied to every one amongst the Jews who excited any hopes that he might be the promised deliverer. Did he answer to this name? What Excalibur was to those old British barons, this name was to all the great men who appeared in Israel. Whoso answereth to this name, the same is the Son of God and King of Israel. And none answered to it until Jesus came. He was not at all the kind of person men expected. They objected to him, as those old British barons did to Arthur, that he was of humble birth and lowly parentage; they said that no good thing could come out of Nazareth. But, for all that, he and he alone answered to the name; he and he alone fulfilled the name. Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, Judas the Maccabee, all fell short; but Jesus answered and fulfilled every expectation. The name fitted him like a glove. So candid and open souls —like Nathanael and Matthew greeted him as the promised Saviour, the King of Israel, because in him was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us." This great faith about Christ was born of their experience of him. Just exactly as Arthur proved his prowess by easily drawing and wielding Excalibur, so Jesus made the men and women about him feel he was Immanuel by the words he spoke and the deeds he did. He produced the sense of God within them; he did the works of God upon them. It was because they had found God in him that they were sure and certain that Isaiah's great word found its fulfillment and satisfaction in Jesus.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Christ's Revelation of the Father (287).

The brilliant Madame de Stael said, "If the Founder of Christianity had done no more than to say, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' he would have conferred an inestimable boon upon man." To the revelation of God's fatherhood he added the great conception of human brotherhood, and taught man the infinite possibility of development in blessedness under the inspiration of the divine ideal of greatness.

The masterful man, the one able to resolve all difficulties, to mow down all opposition, to bend all forces to the realization of his own desire, was the world's ideal of greatness. To conquer, to reign, by whatever means, fair or foul, was the legitimate goal of human ambition and

the evident token of greatness. The vicarious principle of life taught by Jesus Christ in precept and example was a complete reversal of the world's judgment. The spirit of sacrifice which was manifest on occasion among the ancients was the original, permanent, underlying motive of his life. We search the records of the past in vain for any adequate expression of this motive.—Rev. Charles A. Lippincott.

"A God Who Does Something" (288).

In a conversation with Thomas Carlyle, Mr. Froude once said: "I can only believe in a God who does something." With a cry of pain, Carlyle answered: "But he does nothing!" No wonder Carlyle was a pessimist! God is forever in his world. Before Christ came God was in his world. "My Father worketh even until now," said Jesus. God is still in his world—"Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." But all history bears witness that something overwhelmingly great and mighty took place in Palestine about nineteen hundred years ago. The birth of Christ in Bethlehem is the very hinge of history. Before his coming was ancient history; after him is modern history. As Ernest Renan said: "To tear his name from this world would be to rend it to its foundation."

Jesus gave to the world the highest truth concerning God. From all eternity his home had been in the bosom of the Father; from the Father he came to make truth known to man. As is a man's thought of God, so will his whole life be. The Psalmist had said: "The Lord is my Shepherd." He had said more than that; he had sung:

"Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

But Jesus taught even more than that; he said: "God is not only like a father, God is a father; and he pities not only them that fear him, but most of all them that fear him not." "When ye pray, say, Our Father"—this is the central truth of the Christian religion. We build all theology upon and around this idea. Its influence in history is greater than can be estimated; it is appreciated today more than ever before; and it will more and more influence our thinking and control our lives.

There had been kindness in the world before Jesus came; Jesus wonderfully broadened and deepened it. Jesus gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and strength to the weak. "He went about doing good." Jesus cast out devils, and through the influence of Jesus asylums have been built where unfortunate sufferers are kindly nursed and scientifically treated. Poor lepers used to be driven out from the abode of men to find miserable shelter among the tombs. Jesus touched the lepers with his hands.

The Incarnation (289).

The qualities we attribute to Deity must be incarnated if we are to be molded by them. His wisdom and strength are seen in nature. His domestic perfectness is seen in Jesus, who was "born of a woman, born under the law." He entered our estate as the partner and the friend of whatever is our lot. That plain statement satisfied St. Paul and it satisfies me. Curiosity may desire to know more, but even when laudable it must know its limitations. The permanent blessings of the Birth are

not affected by it. We have also been born of woman, and under the law that regulates human being. For us, as for him, the sanctity of motherhood and infancy is supreme. For us, as for him, the path of duty leads to the door of death and death to mansions of the just.—S. Parkes Cadman, D.D.

God With Us, God For Us (290).

A great minister, who was noted for his Christ-like spirit, as well as for his consecrated ability, dreamed that he had died and stood at the gate of heaven knocking for admission. He gave his name, only to be told that his name did not appear upon the books. At last, after earnest entreaty, he was bidden to enter and was told he would have the privilege of appearing before the judge of all the earth, and if he could stand his test he might abide in heaven forever. Standing before the throne, he gave his name, and the following questions were put to him: "Have you led a righteous life?" And he said, "No." "Have you always been kind and gentle?" Again he replied in the negative. "Have you always been forgiving to those who have been around you?" "Alas, no, I have miserably failed here." "Have you always been honest and just?" And he answered, "I fear not." As question after question was put to him by the judge, his case seemed more and more hopeless. The last question was asked him, and to that, too, he was obliged to give the same negative reply. Just when he seemed to be in despair, the brightness about the throne became brighter, and suddenly he heard a voice sweeter than a mother's voice. The speaker said: "My Father, I know this man. It is true that he was weak in many ways, but he stood for me in the world, and I take his place before thee." Just as the last words of the sentence were spoken, the dream was over, and the man awoke; but he had his lesson, and it is a lesson for us all. We have in ourselves no standing before God. It must be in Christ.—J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D.

XXXVII. REPENTANCE FRUITAGE.

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."—Matthew 3:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Henry Ward Beecher presented the following analysis of this theme in one of his earlier sermons:

I. Repentance is not a formal or technical thing. It is simply an operation of the human mind in regard to evil things—putting spurs to the zeal of men, in going away from evil and towards good. Repentance therefore, is merely an abandonment of evil things, in order that one may reach after better and higher things. The degree of repentance essential is just that which is necessary to make you let go of mischief and evil. Just as soon as you know enough of the evil of sin to let it alone, or to turn away from it with your whole strength, you have repentance enough. Deep and abundant convictions are beneficial in certain natures, because in these natures only such sensuous and wrestling experiences will avail, since they are coarse-fibred, since they rank low morally, and since, therefore, they need rasping. But if they are more nobly strong, if their moral nature is more sensitive, if they can turn from evil on a slighter suggestion, is it not better? For men ought to repent easily. It is a sin and a shame for them to repent reluctantly and grudgingly.

II. The highest form of repentance is a turning away from bad to good on account of that imperfect love which belongs to us in our physical and earthly relations; for we seldom find men who have the pure and spiritual impulse of love toward God so strong as to act as a dissuasion from evil and a persuasion toward good until they have actually been drawn into a divine life.

III. Repentance may be a secondary impulse for some special intent or struggle, or it may become a dominant influence, acting through long periods, and renewing and refreshing itself continually.

IV. From this great law no one can escape. There is not a man who does not need this primary experience, this turning to a higher life from the animal life; and there is no man who was born with such qualities, with such a balance of all the attributes of the soul, that he stands disengaged from the great law of repentance of everything that is evil, and of aspiration toward all that is good.

* * *

Dwight L. Moody in one of his notable sermons on Repentance, which was instrumental in influencing multitudes to bring forth its fruits, stated its salient features as follows:

Say, as the poor thief did, "Lord, remember me." That was his golden opportunity, and the Lord heard and answered and saved him. Did not Bartimeus call on him while he was near? Christ was passing by Jericho for the last time, and he cried out, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And did not the Lord hear his prayer, and give him his sight? Do you believe the Lord will call a poor sinner, and then cast him out? No! his word stands for ever, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

At the Fulton Street prayer-meeting a man came in, and this was his story. He said he had a mother who prayed for him; he was a wild, reckless prodigal. Some time after his mother's death he began to be troubled. He thought he ought to get into new company, and leave his old companions. So he said he would go and join a secret society; he thought he would join the Odd Fellows. They went and made inquiry about him, and they found he was a drunken sailor, so they black-balled him. They would not have him. He went to the Freemasons; he had nobody to recommend him, so they inquired and found there was no good in his character, and they too black-balled him. They didn't want him. One day, some one handed him a little notice in the street about the prayer-meeting, and he went in. He heard that Christ had come to save sinners. He took him at his word; and, in reporting the matter, he said he "came to Christ without a character, and Christ hadn't black-balled him."

My friends, that is Christ's way. Is there a man here without a character, with nobody to say a good word for him? I bring you good news. Call on the Son of God and he will hear you. Call on him tonight.

* * *

Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D., in one of his strongest evangelistic sermons on Repentance, described it in these words:

Repentance is sorrow for sin—at least, that is, part of it. Sorrow for sin because other people are hurt. I know of a man who lived in the state of New York. He was a brilliant lawyer, a university man who became addicted to strong drink. He had all but killed his wife and children, and one day his little boy ran to my friend the minister, and said, "Come as quickly as you can. Father is drunk again." And my friend rushed through the streets with the boy and reached the door of the hovel only to find a woman standing there with a white face. She said to my friend, "Sir, he is dead." And the little fellow ran up and threw his arms round his mother's waist and said, "Mother, aren't you glad? aren't you glad?" I told that story in Sydney, Australia, and the next day a young lawyer met me on the street and said, "That story of yours is not fanciful. My father is a judge in Sydney, and if at this moment I should hear that he was dead I would get on the tram car and go out to the edge of the city and I would take my old gray-haired mother in my arms and say, 'Mother, he is dead. No more heart-aches, no more blows, no more anguish, as you wait for him.'"

Remorse on account of sin is also a part of repentance. Remorse because sin hurts yourself. Repentance is also contrition, because sin is against God.

But you must put all these together. Sorrow for sin, remorse on account of sin, contrition because of sin. Then what else? Do what the prodigal did. Say this, "I will arise and go to my father." He arose and went. That is repentance.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Restitution (291).

A conscience-stricken citizen of Fullerton, Cal., has written to the Post Office Department as follows:

"Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.:

"Dear Sirs:—Several years ago I used a few stamps that had been used once and hadn't been canceled. Now I am trying to live right and wish to straighten up all my back tracks, so will send 10 cents to pay for them. Am sorry I did it." The ten cents have been added to the miscellaneous postal receipts.

Sorrow for Sin (292).

A good many years ago a German prince visited the arsenal of Toulon, where a large number of men, condemned for different crimes, were working as galley slaves. The prince was told that, in compliment to his visit, he was allowed to free one of them. He inquired of first one, then another, the cause of his punishment. Each declared that he had been unjustly accused, or wrongfully arrested, till he came to a fine, big man with a sorrowful face. He confessed what he had done, and said, "I acknowledge it, it grieves me, and I deplore it." Turning to the officers, the prince exclaimed, "This is the man for whose release I make request. He is the first I have found who feels he has done wrong and has anything to be forgiven." Does God ever have to say to us, "Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned?"—W. F. Crafts.

Repentance—How and Why? (293).

How shall you try to repent? Think over the abominableness of your sin? Yes; that Manchester surgeon, before anesthetics were invented, gave wise counsel to his patient: "Take a long, last look at your hideous death-working sore and then fix your eyes on me, and do not take them off till I am done."

Meditate upon the kindness of God? Certainly; the Scripture asks, "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Jeremiah's figure of a love match between the believer and God is recalled and the Ephesian Christian is represented as having left his first love. A husband and wife have drifted apart. What an age since he took her in his arms and said: "You are the dearest creature in all the world!" Maybe one of them begins to recall the old love-making days and revives experiences of deep affection. Then lover-like attentions and devotion are repeated, soon tenderness and forgiveness-asking and pardon-granting have come. You commence again where you have commenced to be a Christian, sing the hymns you sang; read the Scripture you read; bring back the covenant with God, the hatred of sin and love of the Saviour.

If you should not repent, what then? "Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." Repentlessness spells uselessness and uselessness spells removal. Dare the Revelator intimate that the church at Ephesus, founded by Apollos the eloquent, and ministered to three years by Paul and written to by him, dare anyone intimate the collapse of that Church?

"Repent"—be righteous, be useful, or away goes thy candlestick! Which Ephesian could fancy Ephesus dead—Ephesus, a thousand years old? Ephesus, situated by sea and river and fertile plain unsurpassed, the

Queen of Asiatic cities! My wife and I stood amidst the ruins of Ephesus, and on the excavated foundations of Diana's Temple. Not a soul dwelt within a mile, and at that distance only a yakaluk of the wretched folk. The sea was a half day's journey from the place, the silt of the river Cayster having pushed it back. The opulent valley that one time laughed with harvests was a miasmatic swamp. Ephesian Church and Ephesus, where are ye? Answer Mount Caressus, sentineling for centuries this silent site of the ancient city! Flung from bleak Caressus, hear the sentence for Ephesus by the Cayster and the sea, and for New York by the Hudson and the sea, and for every man and woman and child: "Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."—Rev. S. Edward Young, D.D.

Self Detestation (294).

The disposition to justify one's self, to minimize our sin, to palliate our guilt, to excuse our wrong, is sure evidence of a wrong heart. It is a manifestation of human pride. It is proof that the one who does so has not in any wise as yet repented. David had not a word to say in his favor when he pleaded for forgiveness before Jehovah (Psa. 51); the prodigal son had not a shadow of an excuse for his conduct; and Paul, though he recognized the mitigating circumstances of his ignorance and unbelief, never spoke of his guilt but in the darkest and most awful terms, and his sense of unworthiness seemed to grow in proportion with his appreciation of God's grace. It is only to such a frame of mind that God's forgiving mercy can really come.—Selected.

XXXVIII. TEMPTATIONS: CHRIST'S AND OURS.

"Then was Jesus led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."—Matthew 4:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. A. W. Benson summarized the lessons of this incident as follows:

I. The three forms of temptation which Christ endured and over which he triumphed, are the same in substance to which all men are now exposed. They are covetousness, pride, and ambition. They will always assail us through three sources; through our wants, through spiritual delusions, through worldly prospects and hopes. They can only be repelled by the truths of the Bible. Christ's example is left us for imitation. "It is written," is the Christian's sword. A good knowledge of the Word of God is our best protection. "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." (Psa. 119:11). "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer." (Psa. 17:4).

II. We have no right to the promises of God, and we can claim none, when we are on Satan's territory and carrying out his suggestions. Divine promises hold good only to those who meet danger in the path of duty. Where God sends a man there he will protect him, but not otherwise. If we are brought face to face with a duty to which the Lord has led us, we may confidently expect him to sustain us and not be disappointed! Knowing our weakness Christ has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." Let us not then be puffed up and think that we can stand where others fall! Christ's victory in the second form of the temptation shows the just limit that separates confidence and presumption.

III. Never does the devil lie more outrageously than when he promises. What had he to give? All he had of the world to give was its pride and vain show, its guilt and suffering, its despair and death. The temptation which seemed plausible on the outside, on a closer view is found to contain within it a deadly sting. In like manner all of Satan's golden promises to us contain in them the germs of their own destruction. If we love the world it will forsake us (1 John 2:17); if we love money we will find it the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10); if we love iniquity in any form, we will find that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

* * *

Rev. F. B. Meyer emphasized the following applications: 1. Your temptations are not an uncommon experience.—We have all the same constitution; and there is much more similarity in our temptations than we suppose. 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' 'The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.'

2. All temptation is under the restraint of God.—As in the case of Job, Satan cannot tempt us without God being first acquainted with his

designs. And, as in the case of Peter, there seems to be almost a seeking and receiving of permission to tempt before Satan assails. In any case, no temptation befalls us greater than our power to combat and overcome. And we are permitted to be tempted, that we may learn to avail ourselves of the resources of which we might otherwise be unaware.

3. Satan can be conquered.—Watch and pray. Be sober in your tastes and habits, in your words and deeds. Never neglect to abide in your strong fortress, Christ. Keep with the flock of God. Nourish your souls with the Word, that you may be healthy and strong. Gird on the whole armor of God. Resist the first insignificant advances of the foe. Be steadfast in the faith. Look instantly to Jesus to cast the panoply of his protection around you; and to stand between you and your assailant, as a shield before the body of the warrior. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Go into battle assured of success: this your talisman, They overcame by the blood of the Lamb; this your battlecry, Jesus saves, Jesus saves.

* * *

Rev. Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) said on this text:

If it be any comfort to a man fighting hard, bloodstained and dusty, let him know that every one shares with him the risk and travail of conflict. The fine saint was tempted only yesterday by wicked thoughts; and last week that woman was wrestling with doubts about the existence of God. Temptation is not a calamity of one period of life, or of one type of character; it is a human discipline—a tribulation through which we must all pass before we enter into the fullness of the Kingdom. Read the lives of the Bible heroes, or any other honest biography you can come across, and mark that the best men have been as soldiers, fighting till the trumpet sounded recall, and lying down to rest in their dinted armor. History affords us only one perfectly good man, and he was the most fiercely tempted of us all. Upon the occasion of our text, first to selfishness, next to presumption, and lastly to blasphemy; nor was this the only attack in his life, for there are a hundred signs that always he was resisting till he could finally say, "Not my will, but thine, be done," which was the moment of victory. Let no man say that Christ's temptation was not real, nor such as besets other men, for this is to make the life of our master into a vain show, and to take from his disciples the heartening comfort of Jesus' sympathy, and the triumphant strength of the Master's will.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Penalty or Opportunity (295). Temptations are of two kinds—those that come as penalty, and those that lie in opportunity.—Stimson.

How He Overcame (296).

Shortly after conversion, one night, on a Christian's return from a meeting where he had been speaking and dealing with inquirers up to a late hour, it seemed as though a voice spoke in his soul, "You have been preaching tonight about the joy of being a Christian. Where is your joy? You know you do not feel a bit of joy. You have not a bit of feeling of love now in your heart to Christ. You are a hypocrite and not saved at all. You had better just give this all up."

It seemed very dark to him for a minute. It was all true, as far as his feelings were concerned. He was so mentally exhausted that a reaction had set in. But presently he reached for his Bible and opened to John 5:24, the verse that had been used to bring him to Christ and read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life." Then, thanking God that the Word had not gone, though his feelings had, he says, "I just held the Bible with my finger on that verse, and told the devil to just look at that, and go away and leave me alone; and he did. I went to bed in peace."—Selected.

How He Met the Devil (297).

One of the happiest men I ever knew was a man in Dundee, Scotland, who had fallen and broken his back when a boy of fifteen. He had lain on his bed for about forty years, and could not be moved without a good deal of pain. Probably not a day had passed in all those years without acute suffering. But day after day the grace of God had been granted him, and when I was in his chamber it seemed as if I was as near heaven as I could get on earth. When I saw him I asked him: "Doesn't Satan ever tempt you to doubt God and to think that he is a hard master?" "Oh, yes," he said, "he does try to tempt me. I lie here and see my old schoolmates driving along in their carriages, and Satan says, 'If God is so good, why does he keep you here all these years? You might have been a rich man, riding in your carriage.' Then I see a man who was young when I was, walk by in perfect health and Satan whispers, 'If God loved you, couldn't he have kept you from breaking your back?'" "And what do you do when Satan tempts you?" "Ah, I just take him to Calvary, and I show him Christ, and I point out those wounds in his hands and feet and side, and say, 'Doesn't he love me?' and the fact is he got such a scare there eighteen hundred years ago that he cannot stand it; he leaves me every time." That bedridden saint had not much trouble with doubts; he was too full of the grace of God.—Moody.

Doubtful Short Cuts (298).

When I think of the long road that Jesus trod, round by the villages and through the Garden, and on to the Cross, and into the grave; "I feel that short cuts are not God's. Do you want to be prosperous? There is no short cut to that, consistent with Christian principle and God. A gentleman said that his strongest temptation was when the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain and showed him ten per cent. And there is no short cut to joy, nor to Christian character; you must go round by the desert to that Canaan. Be patient. Do not be showy, flashy. Hold to it doggedly, in the dark, and go ahead. And though the way be strangely roundabout, full of mistake and struggle and secret cry, it will emerge, in the good time of God, into the land that flows with milk and honey.—Rev. G. H. Morrison.

Satan's Lies (299).

Sin never keeps its promise. Max Muller says of the Hebrew and Greek words translated sin: "There lies in these etymologies the deep

conviction that man in sinning has never attained what he sought; that sin is essentially a delusion and a fraud." The word most used means "to miss the mark." Start a youth toward happiness by a path of sin and he is sure to miss the mark. The archer bending the bow of wrong doing and shooting the arrow of iniquity will not strike the target of well-being.

Sin is sham, delusion, fraud. Crossing Texas I saw a mirage. This desert phenomenon is real in that it has the appearance of water; it is unreal in that it is not what it seems. Had the tourist seen a fainting man struggling toward the mirage for water, he would have hastened to explain the optical illusion as a sham, delusion, fraud. Not dissimilar is sin. Every sinner is deceived. Men follow strong drink in hopes of quenching thirst, but fall, finally, with parched lips and burning brain. Women search for pleasure and find pain, because they follow sin.

Dallying With Temptation (300).

Do not stop to parley with the tempter, as many a one has been ruined in this way.

A young western farmer who had frequented the village bar-room, was converted to temperance principles, but on his visits to the village still continued to tie his team to the hotelman's hitching-post. The trained and watchful eye of a good old deacon noticed this, and after congratulating the youth upon his conversion, he said, "George, I am a good deal older than you, and will be pardoned, I know, if I make a suggestion out of my wider Christian experience. No matter how strong you think you are, take my advice and at once change your hitching-post." Christ made no mistake when he said, "Watch!"—Charles R. Ross.

Avoiding Temptation (301).

Madame de Lambert remarked on the tragedies of Corneille: "The best often give you lessons of virtue, and leave you with the impressions of vice." Serious men and women are as culpable who indulge so freely in the narotics of the mind as the wanton who eats opium for the sake of knowing what dreams it creates. We cannot luxuriate in our leisure hours amid garish, poison-flowers and heavy scents of voluptuousness without injury to our moral health and spiritual life.—Watkinson.

XXXIX. HEART PURITY.

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."—Matthew 5:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett developed the text in this way: What is the significance of this purity which is the condition of the most radiant beatitude? Perhaps if we seek analogies in nature, and see the use of the word in some remote relationships, it may help us to clarify our conception of what a life is like that is pure in the sight of God. Here then is a land that has been purged of monsters. The beast has been driven out. We have a vivid description of the emancipation in one of the earlier "Idylls of the King." The beasts would creep down to the homesteads and steal and destroy. A crusade was appointed for the destruction of the destroyer, and the land was cleared of its foes. Now such an area, rid of the masterful beast, was a purified realm. And surely in the fields of the soul there are beasts of prey. There is the lion of passion, the serpent of envy, the bear of boorishness, the fox of deceit, and many others which find their home and their sustenance in the holy place.

And to get rid of these beasts, to "let the ape and tiger die," would be to create a condition in human life which would reflect one characteristic of the purified state.

Let me take another analogy. Water that is free from all sediment, that is clear and transparent, reflecting every pebble on the river bed, could be described as pure. And here, too, I may find suggestion of the purified life. The soul that is clean and clear in the sight of God has nothing dubious about its character, has nothing hiding in the folds of duplicity. The character is transparent like the sea of glass which the great seer gazed upon before the throne of God and the Lamb.

Take another usage of the word. When the farmer has gathered out the stones from a field, when dead roots and fibers have been removed, when all injurious growths have been extirpated, the farmer describes the cleansed area as "clean." To "clean" the land is to rid it of everything dead or alive that is the enemy of fruitful growth. And so it is with the heart of man. To purify it is to uproot the evil things that suck and drain the good things of their purposed nutriment. And there are dead things that have to be gathered out. And there are poisonous things which must be given no mercy. There are prejudices stretching through the soil with roots like wire. All these have to be removed before the heart can be described as pure.

"Like unto pure gold." Here is another usage of the word. It is descriptive of gold in which there is no alloy, no adulteration. The thing is what it appears to be. It is true gold in its untampered simplicity. So is it with a pure heart. No baser stuff is allowed to mingle with its truth. No cheapening compromise gains an entry. No bits of worldliness are permitted to intrude into piety and devotion. There is no attempt to mix God and man. Life is simple and single, "like unto pure gold."

Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott unfolds the deeper meaning of this in these illuminating sentences:

To the pure in heart, proof of a God seems as idle as proof of a mother to a child clasped in its mother's arms, or proof of love to the two lovers who have just plighted their troth to each other. To such all argument of the question, Does God answer prayer? seems as idle as to a child would seem the question whether he can talk to his father or not. Prayer is not a message by wireless telegraphy to some unknown station, remote, invisiblle, from which some wireless answer may return. Prayer is not a check presented at a bank calling for money to be paid out over the counter at sight or after three days or thirty days of waiting. Prayer is the communion of spirit with spirit. The answer is a new inspiration of courage to meet danger; of patience to take up anew the burden of life; of hope to exorcise the spirit of despair. To one who thus sees God and communes with God the companionship of the Great Companion is the most real, the most intimate, the most certain experience of his life. Into this companionship with God the soul comes not by much study, but by high and holy living. We understand our neighbor only as we feel what he feels, and purpose what he purposes. We understand God only as we are at one with him. Not to intellectual acumen, not to great scholarship, but to purity of intention and purity of imagination, to singleness of purpose, cleanness of thought and tenderness of feeling, is God revealed. We come to the vision of him as we grow into oneness with him by purposing what he purposes. If it is true that we shall be like him when we see him as he is, it is true also that we see him as he is only as we are like him. "Ye are," says Paul, "the temple of God; and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If anyone shall corrupt the temple of God, him shall God bring to corruption." Whatever drives God out of his temple destroys the temple and makes it a common edifice. It is God's temple only when God dwells in it, and God dwells in it only when in aspiration if not actual realization, in strong desire if not always in successful accomplishment, the temple is pure.

* * *

Preaching on "Purity Its Own Protection," Rev. Dr. David Gregg emphasized the following: A holy personality is its own safeguard. It is self-assertive, and by self-assertion it creates its own atmosphere, and pickets itself with its own ideals. All sin is afraid of it and shuns it.

This idea of the protecting power of a holy personality is not a new idea. It is both old and universal. When a man has learned to love what God loves and hate what God hates, his safety is like that of God himself. This is what the old masters in art and painting and sculpture have been teaching the world. In these works of art they have aimed to produce soul and personality; and soul and personality at their best. A friend of mine writes from Paris just after he has seen some of these masterpieces: "I stood in the Louvre, where is the Venus de Milo and also the Sleeping Greek Slave. The slave is majestic in quantity and quality of being. He is a slave, true, but he is still a Greek—a Greek soul, a Greek personality. There is in him the possibility of power unfathomable; and yet he is as tender. A lion is in him and a dove also. It is not easy to find a man of fine quality and of great size combined

The Venus with its womanly purity and ideality is as grand as the Greek Slave. I asked a young man, somewhat tempted by Parisian life, who was looking at these works of art: 'If these people were turned out to wander around the world, would they come back dissipated?' His answer was, 'They would come back without the smell of fire upon them.' 'How do you know?' He replied, 'Look at them. They are too great to be tempted.' But said I, 'They are to be free from family police; they are to be subjected to all the temptations of modern luxury.' 'They would come back with not a single hair singed.' 'How do you know?' 'Look at them. They are too great to stoop. They are full-orbed.' That young man was no philosopher, he was simply a person of good practical instinct; but he felt that nothing can make a man act against reason and conscience and love and the indwelling divine. The whole make-up of such a man is against this." Yes, yes, that is it. A holy personality is its own safeguard.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

In Training (302).

"That," said a sophomore, in one of our colleges to a visitor, "is John Black." He pointed to a wiry, muscular young fellow, who, in boating costume, was making his way to the riverside. "He is going to take a pull on the stream for an hour. He is completely in the hands of his trainer now."

"And what does his trainer do for him?" asked the visitor.

"He regulates his whole day. John gets out of bed at a certain minute every morning; he exercises with Indian clubs; is rubbed down, runs a couple of miles on the course; takes a cold bath; is rubbed down again; and so on until night. Every mouthful he eats is prescribed by the trainer. The day is strictly divided into hours for exercise, for rest, for bathing and for hard work. The life he leads is as hard as the life of a galley-slave."

"Why does he do it?"

"He is to run against the college champion. He must put himself in training if he wants to win the prize."

"What is the prize?"

"A gold medal."

The visitor was also a young man. He did not want to run or jump or row for a prize, but he had a great ambition to live a high, noble, helpful life.

It occurred to him now that he had not been working so hard to that end as this other boy was working for a gold medal. When his companion left him, he walked on alone, and he made a resolution. He would put his soul in training. Every morning he would give an hour to his Bible, and seek to bring his thoughts and motives into comparison with the thoughts and motives of Christ.

He would then exercise his judgment as this athlete did his body. For instance, in the circle of his family and friends, his thoughts were likely to be harsh and censorious, for he was naturally a severe judge. But he would compel himself to find some good feature in each character, to look at his friends through its kindly light.

The runner gave part of the day to climbing a steep mountain in the neighborhood; he thus gained power and health by the muscular exercise and by breathing purer air than that of the town.

He, too, would try to leave behind the gossip, the trivialities, the coarseness on the dead level of his daily life, and climb to the height of some noble thought, or of some great truth of science.

Moreover, as the daily bath was necessary for the body of the athlete, so must it be for the soul. He would seek to cleanse it of the impurities that might originate within, or be gathered by contact with the world from without.

Why, he thought, if this youth puts his body in such severe training to gain a coveted honor in his college life, shall I not train my soul to win a life that is gentle and true and merciful, and that takes hold of "the life to come?"—Presbyterian of the South.

Emptied for God's Filling (303).

There is an old Dutch picture of a little child dropping a cherished toy from its hands; we wonder why, until at the corner of the picture we see a white dove winging its flight toward the emptied outstretched hands. Similarly we are prepared to forego a good deal when once we catch sight of spiritual acquisitions which beckon to us. And this is the true way to reach consecration and surrender.

The old Hebrew word for consecration means "to fill the hand." There will not be much trouble in getting men to empty their hands of wood, hay and stubble if they see that there is a chance of filling them with treasures. The world pities us because it sees only what we give up; but it would withhold its sympathy if it could see how much we receive —good measure, pressed down and running over, given into our bosom.—Selected.

Heart-Keeping (304).

Don't you see how you and I become like the things we think about? If we let our mind be a caravansary for all sorts of evil thoughts, we shall become evil. If we fix our mind upon worldly things, we shall become worldly. If we fix our mind upon things that are above, where Christ is, we shall become like Christ.—I. E. Roberts.

The Higher Path (305).

As I walked back and forth a mile and a half across the beautiful island of Tashiro, visiting and speaking at the schools at either end, I found that there are two paths across from town to town, the lower and the higher. With either you get to your destination, but the paths are so different. The lower is more traveled, has more ups and downs, and is more crooked. The higher requires more climbing to get to it, but it is straighter, quieter, more level, and it takes you to the top of everything and gives you magnificent scenery on every side, islands and sea dotted with ships.

As I walked this higher path, it seemed to me to be a type of the higher spiritual path, with its wider vision and its deeper experiences with God, not so much traveled and having a harder climb to get to it. But then the joy of it.—Woodworth.

The Inner Self (306).

It is this shrouded inner self to which supreme care is to be directed. All noble ethical teaching concurs in this—that a man who seeks to be right must keep, in the sense both of watching and of guarding, his inner self. Conduct is more easily regulated than character—and less worth regulating. It avails little to plant watchers on the stream half way to the sea. Control must be at the source if it is to be effectual.—Alexander MacLaren.

The Standard (307).

Corot said: "When I find myself in one of Nature's beautiful places, I grow angry with my pictures." Pleased with them in his studio, in sight of the glory of the world the artist was humbled. We may be content with ourselves, comparing ourselves with ourselves, but in the presence of the purity and beauty of the Lord we are rebuked.—Selected.

"The Question."

Were the whole world good as you—not an atom better—
Were it just as pure and true,
Just as pure and true as you;
Just as strong in faith and works;
Just as free from crafty quirks;
All extortion, all deceit;
Schemes its neighbor to defeat;
Schemes its neighbors to defraud;
Schemes some culprit to applaud—
Would this world be better?

If the whole world followed you—followed to the letter—
Would it be a nobler world,
All deceit and falsehood hurled
From it altogether;
Malice, selfishness, and lust
Banished from beneath the crust
Covering human hearts from view—
Tell me, if it followed you,
Would the world be better?

—The British Weekly.

XL. SHINING LIVES.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 5:16.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

On this subject of "The Christian A Light," Rev. Dr. Burdett Hart said: We do not need to adopt any philosophical theory of light to perceive the beauty and pertinence of the figure by which our Lord represents his friends as the light of the world. 1. The world is dark because sin dominates it. Sin darkens the mind so that God, truth, duty, the way of salvation by Christ, are obscured. 2. Therefore it needs light, penetrating, revealing, awakening. Watch the earth when the light of morning breaks over it! So the moral world needs the spiritual light—the light of Christian example, instruction, influence. 3. This light is not our light. It is given from above. Christ is the light of the world, and the light that is in us is from him, as the reflected light of the moon is from the sun. It is not given to be hidden, but to shine forth. The old Roman law maintained the right of citizens to unobstructed light. Light is for the world. If we have it we must let it shine. The light of the individual Christian should make an illuminated home. The light of the united Church should be like a lighted city at night, standing on a hill.

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An unidentified preacher unfolded this truth along the following suggestive lines: The Church here is called the light of the world, and we may think of it in three aspects: 1. An Unconscious Influence. The influence of light is exercised without demonstration, yet in the most effective and searching way. So this influence of the Church is often so gentle, so steady, so regular, as to be unconscious both to the Christian and the Church on the one hand, and the person affected on the other. 2. The Power. Light illumines, dispels the darkness. It reveals reality. Light beautifies, it touches the earth with varied colors, it gives lights and shades, it gives form and figure. Light purifies; it can penetrate into the foul pool and convert that which is corrupt into that which is clean. Light has the power to photograph. It can impress upon the sensitive plate the image which reflects it. So, too, the Church and the Christian, as the light shining in the darkness, dispel that darkness and reveal God to man, and man to himself. 3. Reflection. The original light in this world is the sun, which sheds its light upon the objects of earth. In turn these objects reflect that light upon other objects, and thus it is distributed and multiplied, and its effects increased. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The light of the Christian is a reflected one. Jesus shines into us, and we reflect his light out to the world. But reflected light carries with it the coloring of the object from which it is reflected. One object reflects red, another blue, another green, each according to its own particular nature. So, when the light of Christ falls upon us, it is the pure white light that comes out of his own holy character, but

when we reflect the light, it is always colored with our own individual character, with its defects and imperfections.

* * *

Preaching on "The Kind of Christianity the World Needs," Rev. David J. Wylie, D.D., LL.D., used the following treatment:

I. A Christianity not afraid of the facts. The first fact is that the human heart is sinful and that the world needs a Saviour. If anyone is disposed to doubt this proposition, let him look into his own heart or into the police records of our great cities. The sinfulness of mankind is fact number one.

We must also face the fact of partial failure on the part of the church to give Christianity to the world. The reason why there has been failure is because Christians have not always been Christian, have lacked enthusiasm and consecration. Christians have too often been guilty of indifference, extravagance, luxury and worldliness, and nothing paralyzes the efforts of the church so quickly as these sins. We cannot win the world to Christ unless we are dead in earnest.

II. The world needs a Christianity as broad as its sympathies. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ laid down the fundamental principles of his kingdom. This sermon contains all the theology that anyone needs to know, and every Christian should accept as his creed and believe intensely the doctrines of Christ. Jesus Christ was not indifferent to human wants. He did not teach men simply their duties to God, but to each other. He went about doing good and we should walk in his footsteps.

Christians are not properly sympathetic so long as they permit women and girls to work for long hours in unhealthy factories, boys and men to wear out their lives in the dark and damp recesses of the earth, or when the greed for wealth crowds thousands into unsanitary houses. This is a humanitarian age, and we should rejoice that the principles of Jesus Christ are being incorporated more and more into our laws. We should all be anxious that the average man has a better chance.

III. The world needs a Christianity that produces character. What is character? The stamp of God, put upon our souls by education, habit and religion. What God knows us to be. The greatest victory a man ever gains is a victory over himself. Character differs widely from reputation. Reputation is what people think we are; character is what we really are. Both are valuable possessions, and a man should fight for his good name as fiercely as a lioness for her whelps or a king for his throne. We should guard our reputations as the angels guarded the entrance to Eden with flaming swords.

Character shows itself in speech, song, conversation and conduct, in the books we read, the pleasures we enjoy, and in our dealings with our fellow men. True Christianity makes men upright, trustworthy, honest, pure-minded. We should see to it that we are about what our fellow men think us to be, that we have sterling character; for otherwise we shall be guilty of insincerity and hypocrisy, and God hates a hypocrite.

IV. The world needs a Christianity that is filled with the missionary spirit. From the beginning Christianity was missionary in its spirit, and if it ever loses this spirit, it will be disloyal to Christ.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Letting the Light Shine (308).

A first order light in a great lighthouse is a very complicated thing. Five huge circular wicks, one within the other, give a light so white, hot and dazzling, that the eye can not look upon it. The oil must feed just so fast and the wicks be just so high, the draft be regulated to that nicety a good light demands. The heavy glass chimneys must be watched carefully, for if one melts or bends, the light may 'go back,' and this is considered a calamity, if for a few seconds; a crime, if for a few minutes. Sometimes during a heavy storm when the draft can not be regulated just right, chimney after chimney will glow red, and bend and must be removed and a new one put on, and the mariner who may be watching the light will see it wink.

God says, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth"—Acts 13:47. Are you reading God's word daily, that the oil of grace may be applied to the light within you, that it may have life?—McAlister.

Illuminated Christians (309).

If every Christian of us were illuminated by the Spirit of God, how we could light up the churches! But to have a lantern without any light, that would be a nuisance. Many Christians carry along lanterns and say: "I wouldn't give up my religion for yours." They talk about religion. The religion that has no fire is like painted fire. They are artificial Christians. Do you belong to that class? You can tell. If you cannot, your friends can.

There is a fable of an old lantern in a shed, which began to boast because it had heard its master say that he didn't know what he would ever do without it. But the little candle within spoke up and said: "Yes, you'd be a great comfort if it wasn't for me! You are nothing; I'm the one that gives the light." We want to keep in communion with Christ and let him dwell in us richly and shine forth through us.—D. L. Moody.

A Noble Life (311).

At the death of a Christian girl a friend said: "Everywhere she went flowers bloomed in her path, and the air was sweeter when she passed through the room." What a record to leave of life! The aroma of such a character is incense in heaven. There can be no death to one who is in such touch with God.

How to Shine (312).

A gentleman brought back from Germany a little phosphorescent match-safe, and one evening took it out to show to some friends. He turned out all the gas-jets, but the obstinate little match-safe would not shine, and the man concluded he had been swindled. The next day, while examining his purchase more closely, he read on one side, "If you wish me to shine, keep me in the sunlight." He followed the directions, put it out where the sun's rays could be absorbed, and then in a dark room found it had a brilliant glow. Does any one know a better remedy for the Christian whose light has gone out than that which Jude suggests—"Keep yourselves in the love of God?"—S. S. Chronicle.

Unconscious Influence (313).

At Northfield one summer, in a college delegation, there was a young girl whose gay spirits, strong common sense and wise counsel set her always in front of her companions. She never dreamed that in the group prayer meetings her voice had a thrill and her handclasp a meaning that lifted the little meeting near to heaven. She never knew in latter years how much she did by simply being herself in the elevation and broadening of a throng of girls who had not possessed her advantages. Her personality was in itself exquisite, and the altar of consecration to the Master had lifted it to the highest plane of service.

A great sorrow came suddenly to people who were sojourners in a far country. A cablegram from across the sea was brought to them in their inn, and its brief message smote their hearts to breaking. There was in the inn a maid whose office was humble, but who knew what to do because she was Christ's friend. She went to the telephone, spoke to a minister whom she knew, and in a little while knocked at the door of the room where the sorrow had eclipsed the joy, saying, "Dr. Blank is here." The minister brought them comfort, the comfort of Christ, and the young maidservant who called him had done Christ's work too. She had not thought of herself. You see what her personality made her do.—Selected.

Lamps and Reflectors (314).

Home comers by night to the port of Boston may discern the flashing of Minot's Ledge lighthouse while miles out at sea. The solemn winking of that great eye sending out its 1-4-3 seems like a welcome to America. It is the sign that good Uncle Sam's latchstring is out and his light still in the window of home.

I counted the flashes one night from the deck of a Cunarder, and long afterward on a summer morning climbed the tower to see the beacon itself. It proved to be no electric arc that had pierced the gloom for 15 miles seaward, but only a good sized kerosene lamp. The apparatus did not look powerful enough to send out such powerful beams.

One got the real secret of that brilliant flashing when he looked at the great burnished reflectors. They are polished like a mirror and no touch of visitor or attendant is allowed to cloud their gleaming surfaces. It wouldn't take such a stupendous light after all to shine brightly before a background like that.

"Let your light shine," said the Master of life to us all. He assumes that our light will shine up to its capacity if we only give it a proper chance. We are not commanded to change the form or double the strength of the lamp. We are only to provide conditions so that its whole power may be available.

None of us can change the candle power of the light he has to exhibit. Each one of the sons of men comes into the world with certain native powers not capable of change.

But if the candle power of the light may not be enlarged, its actual efficiency may be immeasurably increased by proper attention to the reflectors. When the burnished mirrors of industry and concentration and determination are put behind even a small lamp, it is simply amazing how the light is outrayed.—The Christian Intelligence.

XLI. GOD OR GOLD.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."—Matthew 6:24.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

A discourse on this theme recently published used these lines of cleavage:

What is the precise relation between a man's religion and his business? In what way, and to what extent, should his faith in God influence his conduct in commerce? That would seem to be a simple question, easily answered by Christian people, and yet, practically, for the average man, it is a question beset with difficulty.

Let me, then, indicate what seems to be the true and vital influence of religion on business life in three practical propositions.

I. Every business creates certain specific temptations of its own; it is the business of your religion to resist these temptations.

II. Every business develops certain definite qualities, talents and capacities along its own special lines, and it is the business ot your religion to sanctify these talents and capacities.

III. Every business opens up certain opportunities of helpfulness and service for God and man; and it is the business of your religion to teach you how to realize these things for the glory of God and the benefit of your fellow man.

There is a worldly and there is a Christian way of acquiring wealth. What is the Christian way?

First, the Christian must not seek to acquire property in such a spirit or in such a manner as to violate the law of love.

Secondly, he must not sacrifice his own higher interests in order to acquire it.

The law of love requires that we shall abstain from everything that is injurious to others, and do all we can that is beneficial. Thus it is both negative and positive.—Waffle.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts discussed this subject from the following angle:

Many in seeking money as a good servant have really won a despotic taskmaster. Instead of having money, money has them. Wealth has proved to them a man-stealer. It has kidnapped their manhood. There is no virtue in being a Lazarus. Poverty is not a passport to heaven, nor wealth the key to hell. Christ's parable means that it is better to be one of God's rich poor than one of the devil's poor rich. But it is better still to be a good Dives, rich for both worlds, like Abraham and Job. But "riches without wisdom are food without salt!" The man who is so mismanaging his life that when he passes into the other world, where all save "a handbreadth" of his existence is to be spent, he will leave all he has and enter there a bankrupt, with no treasure laid up in heaven, is not a success, even though he may be a millionaire here.

I make no crusade against wealth in itself. The lever that was to move the world we find to be a lever of gold, and the place which Archi

medes could not find is the Rock of Ages. We would not then, condemn wealth, but convert it to the truth. We would not destroy it, but employ it for humanity. Christ did not condemn those who sold oxen and sheep and doves because they were merchants, but because they made his Father's house "a house of merchandise" and "a den of thieves." Consecrated talents of gold as well as of genius are blessed by the Saviour's words and win the applause of heaven's "well done."

But the man who puts his trust in gold and deposits his heart in the bank, and thinks money means success, is like the starving traveler in the desert, who, seeing a bag in the distance, found in it, instead of food which he sought, nothing but gold, and flung it from him in disappointment, and died for want of something that could save his life. The soul will starve if gold alone administers to its needs.

* * *

This summary is taken from a homily published in the Northwestern Christian Advocate:

When an eternal being is buried in temporal concerns, then the soul is smothered in sense and has become poor indeed. Nothing is more pitiable than the spiritual penury of many a millionaire whose affluence is the envy of a foolish world. No one is more miserable than such a one when some accident of health or fortune drives him to draw upon his scanty inward resources for enjoyment.

Most of us sooner or later must make our choice between transient and permanent good. Earth is a poor warehouse for the storage of treasure; it is infested with mold and decay. Jesus sadly suggests that we may have just the sort of good that we crave. He says of the rich, "Ye have your consolation now," and across the awful abysses of eternal destiny the pitying voice of doom speaks to Dives in torment, "Son, in thy lifetime thou hadst thy good things." He is rich beyond all eternal accident who can say, "God is the portion of my soul and mine inheritance."

A rich man may so employ the unrighteous mammon that it shall be transfigured with spiritual meaning and become an everlasting investment. Yet the Christian Church must never forget that the first beatitude of the Blessed One was, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Grasping Spirit (315).

The traveler in Italy sees the excavation still going on at Pompeii, by which the scoriæ of ancient Vesuvian eruption are being carefully removed from the buried city. It is never known at what stroke the pick or shovel will uncover some relic of great interest and priceless worth. Report was made recently that workmen who were digging for a foundation of a new building outside the area of the buried city found the body of a woman which had been petrified. Both hands were full of jewels. Evidently the woman fled from the eruption of the fateful mountain and was caught and buried in the downpour of hot ashes. The jewels are excellently preserved, having been protected from the lava by the body. They consist of bracelets, necklaces, rings, amulets studded

with gems, and a pair of earrings, which are probably unique. They may be the most valuable specimens of ancient jewelry ever discovered. Each earring contains twenty-one perfect pearls set in gold in imitation of a bunch of grapes. What a tragedy is revealed in that petrified corpse still grasping those jewels in its hand! The oncoming rush of darkness and ashes, the probable delay to secure the jewels, the attempted escape with the precious treasure closely gripped in the hand, the deluge of burning scoriæ that finally overwhelmed the unhappy woman—all is laid bare by the spade as though it happened but yesterday. And is not the same fate overtaking many in this day? How many are searching for and grasping after jewels and gold, wealth and fashion and pleasure, while careless of their souls and the oncoming judgment?—Presbyterian Banner.

Greed (316).

Captain Scott, in "The Voyage of the Discovery," tells of the immense care that was taken by the magnetic experts on board to banish all iron and steel from the vicinity of the magnetic observatory. Everything within thirty feet of the observatory had to be made of brass, lead, hemp, or some other non-magnetic material. These regulations secured the accuracy of the magnetic observation.

But the motions of the heart are disturbed by a bit of gold anywhere in its neighborhood. The thought of gain seems to mar and deflect the whole delicate machinery of the moral sense. Let a single yellow particle insinuate itself too near the sacred circle of the conscience, and the judgment is no longer true to the eternal verities. We must watch here lest greed should cause us to forget honesty, fairness, brotherliness.—Watkinson.

Success or Failure? (317).

Worldly men are only satisfied with a little more than they have. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver." Columbus and his followers, when they had landed on this continent, at once asked the Indians for the land of gold, of which they long had dreamed. They were pointed over the mountains, and when they had crossed them they were pointed beyond yet other mountains, and so day after day they climbed the hills in vain. "So," says Irving, "the land of gold is ever beyond the mountains."

Young men are apt to think that the catalogue of happiness and success is all written on the back of bank bills, and some are willing to coin their hearts to increase their wealth. You look upon the rich man as the incarnation of satisfaction, the embodiment of success, but happiness is the gift of God and cannot be purchased with money. The man who dies in the midst of bank books, unless his treasure and his heart are in heaven, really dies poor, for he goes to the other world bankrupt, taking nothing with him, not even a hope. Men whisper, "How much did he leave?" One answers, "A million." Another says, "He left two millions." But God and angels answer more truly, "He left all he had."

Wealth consecrated to the service of God and man is twice blessed; the poor rise up to call it blessed, and it has the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it; but gold without God, and banknotes which have not beneath their rustle the throbbing of a

Christian heart, are like a millstone hanged about the soul to sink it in the depths of despair.—Crafts.

Gold Won; God Lost (318).

In North Africa, in a nook sheltered under the mountains and surrounded by rich groves of orange and palms, is a large hotel; all its inmates are exiles from home and native land. Because the little town exempts them from arrest, these guests have found therein a place of refuge. Who are these American exiles? They are bookkeepers, cashiers, confidential clerks, directors, who have been guilty of dishonesty and with their booty have fled from justice. Sitting in the garden or lingering beneath the fountains, they are seeking to forget the past; but lo! there are no waters of Lethe in Africa. In Mexico also there is one street given up to these exiles from home, and in a Canadian city there is another colony of restless and heart broken fugitives. The path upon which they entered seemed to be paved with gold, but the end of that path was fiery ashes.

Weighted Souls (319).

When Garrick showed Dr. Johnson his fine house, gardens, statues, pictures, etc., at Hampton Court, what ideas did they awaken in the mind of that great man? Instead of a flattering compliment which was expected—"Ah, David, David," said the Doctor, "these are the things which often make a deathbed terrible!" They do that when they are acquired dishonestly or at the expense of a man's higher nature.

Expensive Wealth (320).

One man asked another: "How is your old classmate, F., doing?"

"Not very well, I am sorry to say."

"Why, I thought I heard he was at about the top of the profession."

"So he is."

"And growing rich fast."

"Yes, that is true."

"Well, what do you mean then?"

"I mean that he is running down hill every day—is almost at the bottom; and the prospect is darker the longer he lives. He seemed to be a noble fellow in college, with something of almost Christian principle in him. But he has sagged away into a mean ambition, grown harder and colder with every year, is getting more tightly hide-bound in his selfishness, and, for aught I see, is already virtually a lost man."

"This is a new way you have of looking at men like him."

"Perhaps so; but possibly we may find, by and by, that other eyes up yonder see him in about the same light."

When a man fills his pocket to the neglect of his mind and soul, his wealth becomes the silver bridle of an ass.

That rich man is a failure who is "living the life of the flesh, whether in low, sensual gratification, or that which is refined, æsthetic, and selfish."—Selected.

XLII. THE LOYAL AVOWAL.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 10:32, 33.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

A noted preacher in commenting on the cowardice which holds men back from confession of Christ, says:

"Of what are they ashamed?"

I. Are they ashamed of his mysterious nature? Not the least mysterious part of it was its duality. But if the Scriptures be accepted as true, we can not evade the conclusion that he was both God and man. And, considering his singular mission to earth, is it not to be expected that he would be unique, and stand upon a higher plane than those whom he came to save? If he were a mere man, would it not be a heavier tax on faith to believe that he is a Saviour, than to accept the teaching that, in order to qualify him for his work, Deity and humanity were united in him, that thus man may be brought back to God?

II. Are they ashamed of his death? That he died on the cross is a historical fact. That he died, not as an evil doer but as an innocent being, is equally well established. He died a martyr to a worthy cause, indeed. But more, he died to bear the sin and shame of those whom he would save. He was man's substitute. Is that any reason for being ashamed of him? Does not the principle of suffering and sacrifice for the life and well-being of others run through all human experience? We know it in every other instance. The mother gives her life for the child; the life-saver plunges into the deep to rescue the drowning man; the fireman leaps into danger to carry out those imperiled by the flames; the soldier gives his life for his country. And when, as a result of such heroic act, one bears the scars, he points to them with pride. When he becomes disabled he is pensioned. Why not glory in the cross of Christ, the symbol of his sacrifice and love?

III. Are they ashamed of his teachings? Never man spake as this man. Words of matchless wisdom, of incomparable love, of sweetest sympathy, fairness to people in every position of life! His words have been the seed thoughts from which have been evolved the highest philosophy, the purest morality, the best legislation and the holiest religion. His Sermon on the Mount stands without an equal in the loftiness of its conception, its practical adaptation to the needs of men, and in simplicity of expression. As a teacher he is without a peer. He has proved himself to be anointed of God, a prophet of keener insight and higher authority than any before or since. Is there reason to be ashamed of his teachings?

* * *

Rev. Dr. W. H. Clough says: What is it to be ashamed?

I. Shame is a moral emotion. It is the reaction of a moral passior

against what is conceived to be a wrong. The confusion of a little child when caught in some petty theft, the flush on the young man's brow when some base charge is laid against him, the blanched cheek of a man when some fear of disgrace shakes his heart, are signals of this inward emotion. The strong moral anger of a brave spirit at any wanton ill-doing, and the pathetic sadness of a loving heart at another's fall, are nobler instances of the office of shame. When Jonathan rose from his father's table in anger at the wrong done to David, when Elisha looked on the brazen face of guilty Gehazi, when Jesus looked round about him with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, this moral emotion of shame was in flood within. Shame is a flame kindled by the conscience, and it shines out in the blush on the cheek, and breaks forth in the brave word on the tongue.

II. But this moral emotion of shame may be perverted. A man may be ashamed of what is innocent, what is pure, what is holy. The man who hangs his head for honest poverty, who conceals his humble birth and lineage, who is pricked in his heart at his father's toil-worn hands, or his mother's simple speech, who is mortified by the homeliness of his narrow way of life, has vulgarized and degraded the emotion of shame.

* * *

At the close of a prayer meeting among sailors, a young seaman, who had only a few nights before been converted, came up to the leader and laying a blank card before him, requested him to write a few words upon it, because, as he said: "You will do it more plainly than I can." "What must I write?" said my friend. "Write these words, sir: 'I love Jesus—do you?'" After he had written them, my friend said: "Now you must tell me what you are going to do with the card." He replied: "I am going to sea tomorrow, and I am afraid if I do not take a stand at once I may begin to be ashamed of my religion, and let myself be laughed out of it altogether. Now as soon as I go on board, I shall walk straight to my bunk and nail up this card upon it, that every one may know that I am a Christian, and may give up all hope of making me either ashamed or afraid of adhering to the Lord."

The young sailor was right. A bold front is often more than half the battle, and many a general has saved himself from being attacked by making what is called a "show of force." So let it be with you in the carrying out of your religious convictions. Meet your assailants, not with retaliation, but with calm fortitude.—Selected.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Young Convert (321).

A young convert got up in one of our meetings and tried to preach; he could not preach very well either, but he did the best he could—but some one stood up and said, "Young man, you cannot preach; you ought to be ashamed of yourself." Said the young man, "So I am, but I am not ashamed of my Lord." That is right. Do not be ashamed of Christ—of him who bought us with his own blood.

The Inevitable Christ (322).

The story has come down from the early centuries that when the

storm of persecution broke over the Christian Church in Rome, the little company of the believers besought Peter to seek refuge in flight. His sense, both of loyalty and of honor, rose up to protest. But his friends pleaded that while their deaths would be only the loss of a few sheep of the fold, his would be the loss of the shepherd. He set out by night along the Appian way. But as he traveled a vision flashed upon him of a figure clothed in white and a face crowned with thorns. "Quo vadis, domine?" "Whither goest thou, Lord?" Peter cried to Christ, "To Rome, to be crucified instead of thee."

"Into the night the vision ebbed like breath,
And Peter turned and rushed on Rome and death."

That is a parable of the inevitable Christ. Whether we seek him or seek him not, whether we are in the way of our duty or out of it, the vision of Christ shall meet us face to face.—Rev. W. M. Clow.

Christ Attracts the Best (323).

It would be a real difficulty in the way of accepting Christianity, says Dr. Gwatkin, if it did not attract the best men of every time. But it does! It had a Paul and an Origen and an Athanasius and an Augustine in the early days; it has had a Newton and a Kepler and a Faraday and a Kelvin in these days of ours. The mightiest minds find in Christ their Master. And at the head of the procession of the gifted and the learned who own Christ as Lord is this great teacher of Israel who came to Jesus by night.

Our Lord satisfies the highest as well as the humblest. We are sundered from one another by great chasms of difference. We are rich and poor; we are gifted and commonplace; we are learned and ignorant. But, whatever our condition, Christ is our sufficiency. He meets every need. He satisfies every want. He answers every aspiration. He stoops to the lowest. He is mightier than the mightiest. If only we come to him, as Nicodemus came to him, we shall be constrained exultingly to say—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find."

—Rev. J. D. Jones.

Real Confession (324).

It is easy to hang on our walls great master words of Christ, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But to make all that is done under the shadow of that text pure, is the test of our loyalty to Christ. It is easy to take an interest in Christ's kingdom, and to be conspicuous in its service, but to go down to our daily business and to hear Christ's word "Follow Me" clearly above the babble of its sounds, and to obey, is the mark of our loyalty. It is easy to kneel in prayer, and to commit oneself to God's keeping, but to go forth to our pleasures and to hear Christ saying, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" and to make answer meet, is to confess Christ. A merchant was called upon by another who asked him to join in a new venture. The inducements were most alluring. The basis of the proposal was financially sound. The profits were large and secure. The conduct of its affairs would not be a heavy addition to his labor. The speaker was persuasive

and urgent. The merchant had almost yielded to the request to share in the enterprise. But its dividends were to be wrung out of a traffic which imperiled, and often degraded, the natives of the West Coast of Africa. There came to the tempted man an inward vision—do you know it?—of a face smitten with sorrow. He heard an inward voice—have you heard it?—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" He bowed down to the sovereignty of Christ's words. He stood up with a clear and simply spoken word, No! He was not ashamed of Christ, and Christ shall not be ashamed of him.—Selected.

The Manly Thing to Do (325).

Being a Christian is synonymous with being manly. Jesus was the ideal man. He above all others was candid, brave and true. He was incapable of anything cowardly or underhanded. His unshrinking courage thrilled and lifted the men who knew him. To be a Christian is to go to school to him; the mind which was in him is also to be in us. If through fear or shame we creep and sneak through life, not daring to proclaim our thoughts, our own heart condemns us and tells us that we are unworthy of being numbered among the disciples of One who was always outspoken and magnificently frank.—Charles E. Jefferson, D.D.

Stand Up and be Counted (326).

The Governor of a great state found himself rather unexpectedly, one day, in the midst of a Sabbath School convention. As soon as it was known that he was in the house there was a desire to have him address the meeting, and he was called upon. But he felt himself utterly unprepared; he had no speech ready, and he simply responded: "Friends, I really have nothing to say, but I am heartily in sympathy with your work, and I can at least stand up and be counted." Standing up to be counted does not require any great genius or brilliancy, but there are many times when it does really require courage—a courage in which many gifted ones may be found sadly lacking. To be numbered, and have it know that we are always ready to be numbered among those who stand for whatever is pure and right, and against whatever is evil, however strongly it may be intrenched, is in itself no mean position.

XLIII. SOUL REST.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."—Matthew 11:28.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. D. Jones, in developing the thought of this text, said:

That is the decisive test of a religion that claims to be universal, and that professes to meet the needs of a world—what message has it for the "weary?" For the "weary," after all, form the majority of mankind, and a religion that cannot minister to them cannot pretend to be a religion for the world. For by the "weary" I do not mean the physically tired and worn. The "weary" are the people who are weary in soul. And these are the "weary" I am thinking of—the people who have lost heart; the people who feel life's load too heavy for them; the people whose spirits are wounded and crushed by sorrow. And the "weary" in this sense—the people who are worn and burdened by sorrow, by temptation, by sin, by fear—are everywhere. I venture to say again, they constitute the majority of mankind. At one time or another we all find ourselves enrolled in their ranks. And the real test of a religion, of its value and worth, is this: Can it do anything for the weary? Can it minister to the diseased mind? Can it bind up the broken in heart?

Pleasure speaks to the vigorous and strong; not to the weary.

Business speaks only to the strong.

Life in general speaks to the healthy and youthful.

But it is the glory of our Christian falth that it can minister to the "weary," that it can succor with words the tired and the broken, that it can breathe new hope into the bankrupt and the despairing.

Dr. Matheson, in his book on the Portrait of Christ, puts it this way: "Christianity," he says, "is a regressive religion. It goes back to gather up the lost things—the things which have fallen by the way and been left behind. It is the glory of Jesus that he goes back to the forest of humanity to seek the children that have lost their way. All the rest are pressing forward. Brahmin, Buddhist, Parsee, Greek, Roman—all their messages are for the strong. Jesus alone has a message for the weak." That is it exactly. Other religions preach the rather heartless doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." Jesus preached "the survival of the unfit." He knew how to succor with words him that was weary.

He is still master of that gracious secret. And that is what makes him a Saviour for the world.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Rest for the Sin-Weary (327).

I was preaching in a city in England, some time ago, and the next night I received a letter asking for prayer and telling a story of sorrow and tears, with no name attached. On the next Sunday a man came to the church and I talked with him in private. He said, "I am the writer of that letter; I am the father of nine children, all of whom are living.

My wife is very delicate. I have held a position of trust for thirty years and am looked upon as a respectable citizen. I am a fraud." He then told me that twenty-five years before he was a gambler and stole $500 from his employer and so "cooked" the books that the theft was never known. He had never been able to get $500 to repay it, but had never gambled again, and continued: "You don't know the hell I have been carrying about ever since. Three times I have presented myself to a church for membership, for I wanted to be a good man, but when I got to the church I dared not enter. It seemed as if that $500 stood up and said, 'You daren't enter.' In your sermon you told me to slay utterly. That means confession." "It does." "That may mean exposure?" "Yes." "It may mean prison?" "Yes, it may." He then spoke of his wife and children, and I said: "Don't you see, you don't sin alone. It is not what you do for yourself only, it is what you are doing for other people, too." He said: "See what it means for my wife and children? Oh, have pity!" I said: "Stop a minute. The sin was not against your wife. First of all, it was against God, and you have to put God in his right place. You have to set everybody else aside and begin with God, prison or no prison, exposure or no exposure, disgrace or no disgrace, God, God first."

That poor fellow trembled like a leaf, and then with the tears streaming down his face he cried, "Thou God of my mother, have mercy on me!" And I dropped to my knees beside him and put my arms around him and tried to help him to pray. At last he said: "Prison or no prison, Christ for me!" Presently he got up from his knees and I said, "Have you the same employer you had thirty years ago?" "Yes," he said. "Does he still go to business?" "Yes, every morning." "Then," said I, "ask for an interview and I will pray for you. He has kept you for thirty years and you have been a valuable servant. Tell him all your story. How you gambled, how you got into that tight fix, tell him everything, and then say, 'Sir, if you can have pity on my wife and children, take so much off my salary each week; but if you cannot then send me to jail.' God stands for the man who stands for the right." And if ever I prayed in my life I prayed that morning, from 9 to 11. At 5 o'clock I saw him coming up the street. He stumbled up the steps and threw his arms around my neck and when he got inside he said, "God is good. I told my story. My employer listened and when I had told him all he said, 'Herbert, from today you are my friend. I will not only forgive you but from this hour I will raise your salary.'"

Every time I go to that city that man meets me. He is now a local preacher. He came out right because he was prepared to do right before God. The man who will do that will come out right, if not here, he will come out right yonder, up there.—Gypsy Smith.

With Heart Attuned (328).

Nothing could induce Ole Bull to play in public until his violin was in perfect tune. It did not make any difference how long it took him or how uneasy his audience became, if a string stretched the least bit during a performance, even if the discord was not noticed by any one but himself, the instrument had to be put into harmony before he went on. A poorer musician would not be so particular. He would say to

himself: "I will run through this piece, no matter if one string is down a bit. No one may detect it but myself."

It does not matter what particular instrument you may be using in the great life orchestra, whether it be the violin, the piano, the voice, or your mind expressing itself in literature, law, medicine, or any other vocation, you can not afford to start your concert until you are in tune with the Infinite. This means soul-rest.—Selected.

A Soul at Rest (329).

Some years ago a rescuing party after a long struggle reached the gallery in the mine where some English miners had been imprisoned for days. They were found all dead. By their side were written their last messages to the loved ones whom they were not to see again. They were messages full of love, and of joy in their faith in Jesus Christ. Both expressions were equally real, their love of their friends and their love of their Lord. This joy and peace, this strength in the presence of death itself, is what he came to bring; what he has brought to unnumbered souls and what he is bringing today and is able to bring to whoever will receive him.—Stimson.

The Burden Bearer (330).

In the summer of 1878 I descended the Rigi with one of the most faithful of the old Swiss guides, who gave me unconsciously a lesson for life. His first care was to put my wraps and other burdens upon his shoulders. He asked for all; but I chose to keep back a few for special care. I soon found them no little hindrance to the freedom of my movements, but still I would not give them up until my guide, returning to me where I sat resting a moment, kindly but firmly demanded that I should give him everything but my alpenstock. Putting them with the utmost care upon his shoulders, he again led the way. And now I found I could make a double speed with double safety. Then a voice spoke inwardly: "Oh, foolish, willful heart, hast thou indeed given up thy last burden? Thou hast no need to carry them, nor even the right." Then, as I leaped lightly from rock to rock down the steep mountainside, I said within myself: "And even thus will I follow Jesus, my Guide, my Burden-bearer. I will cast all my care upon him, for he careth for me."—A Daily Thought.

Finding All in Christ (331).

On the outside page of a paper was a cartoon. In the foreground of the picture were heavy, black, thunderous-looking clouds. Through them was a jagged mountain peak. On a shelf of the rock above the clouds stood the figure of a man, evidently a miner. On him were the marks of toil, hardships, care, disappointment, weariness. His head was bare; his hair long, hanging about his shoulders, matted, tangled, making him look almost wild. His face was dark, lined, but triumphant. His arms were bare almost to the shoulders. His shirt was open at the breast. His trousers were gone from the knees down and hung in rags about him. His feet were bare. In his right hand was a pickax. His left hand was held high aloft, and in it he grasped a gleaming stone. On that his eyes were fixed. That was that for which, through weary

months—perhaps years—he had toiled.

The look upon his face was one of exultation. He had triumphed at last. He had toiled and struggled to find the one thing on which his heart was set. Hitherto only disappointment had met his effort, but today he had won. There in his hand was the gleaming diamond. He had achieved! In that stone were home, wife, children, comfort, wealth, rest, peace, for all his after years. He knew it, and the thoughts of what that meant to him made his whole being overflow with joy.

The artist had not left his picture without its symbolic interpretation. Across the heavy black clouds were written these significant words: "Sin and temptation." They were the clouds which had beset him and through which he had come. He was above them now, free from them forever. On the handle of his pick was written, "Faith," on the blade, "Works." They had been the implements of his toil—faith and works—and by faith through his works he had for long been sustained. Across the gleaming stone was written that great word "Salvation." God had rewarded his toil at last. Nothing could ever take that from him. There was forgiveness there. There was hope of glory there. There was assurance of heavenly rest there. It was his, and no hand but the hand that gave it could ever take it away. As we looked and comprehended, the Italian's song swelled up out of our hearts and once more we began to sing,

"Jesus, I come to thee; I am seeking salvation."

This is the story of the song and the picture.—R. S. Holmes, D.D.

Deliverance (332).

Henry Clay, at one time of his life, was burdened with a debt of $10,000, due to a bank in Kentucky. Certain political friends of Mr. Clay raised a sufficient sum of money, and quietly paid off the debt.

In ignorance of the fact, Mr. Clay went to the bank, and said to the cashier, "I have called to see you in reference to that debt of mine to the bank." "You don't owe us anything," replied the cashier. "Why! How am I to understand you?" "Well, a number of your friends have contributed, and paid off that debt—you do not owe this bank one dollar." Tears rushed into Mr. Clay's eyes, and being unable to speak, he walked away.

Mr. Clay felt the joy of a great deliverance—a deliverance from a galling debt. And deliverance is the key-note in the "new song" of all the blood-bought millions on earth and in heaven.

All Fullness Dwells in Him (333).

When Dr. Martineau was resigning his pastorate in Liverpool, this was his farewell utterance: "The one deep faith which has determined my whole word and work among you is in the living union of God with our humanity. We pine as prisoners until we burst into the air of that supernatural life which he lives eternally; we are parched with a holy thirst till we find contact with the running waters of his quick affection. Him immediately, him in person; him for a refuge in temptation; him ready with his breathings of hope for the sorrowing; him always and everywhere living for our holy trust, do we absolutely need for our repose, and wildly wander till we find. In Christ alone is the reconciliation perfect between the human and the divine."

XLIV. DYNAMIC FAITH.

"O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—Matthew 15:28.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Laidlaw, the noted exegete, said on this text:

This faith was great—1. In overcoming obstacles. Its greatness was of the same order as that of the paralytic let through the roof, and of blind Bartimeus. These were three mighties. The first overcame physical hindrances; the second, hindrances opposed by his fellow-men; this woman, more heroically than all, those presented by Christ himself—silence, exclusion, and apparent reproach. 2. It was implicit trust in Christ's work for the instantaneous cure of her absent child. In this respect it was of the same order as that of the courtier at Cana and the centurion at Capernaum, only greater in degree than even the last. In these healings granted to believing prayer for another, faith shows peculiarly generous and noble. Jesus hails its appearance with a corresponding and surpassing generosity; at once avails himself of it, that it may conduct as with lightning flash the blessing to the absent sufferer, and assures the trustful suppliant that the cure is done. 3. It was great in spiritual tact. This is the characteristic excellence on which, doubtless, the Lord's special encomium here rested. His action in the case was not feigned refusal, but a needful process by which alone at that point in his mission a soul outside of Israel could be led to Christ. The greatness of her faith lay in the quick-witted tact with which the woman perceived and accepted her relationship to the world's Redeemer. Just as good sense is a right feeling for reality in the common world of our everyday life, faith is a right feeling for the spiritually and eternally real. It is the trustful willingness to accept our due relation to our Saviour God. Taking at once the lowest room, her faith won the highest praise, and forestalled the day of a universal gospel.

* * *

Rev. Andrew C. Ellis, D.D., developed this text in this way:

I. She was a woman of "grit." She had the capacity and the courage to do. George Matheson did not sit down in despair when stone blindness came upon him. Fanny Crosby is still singing in the darkness, and the story of Helen Keller is one of the most pathetic and inspiring in any tongue.

A little company of people on a railway train were taking the body of the old mother to a distant village for burial. On the way one of them pointed out a little farmhouse standing in a lonely place, and told how the mother had been left alone with seven little children, and how one dark night the train stopped just opposite this little old house, and this mother got off with her bundles, and they handed the children down to her one by one, seven of them, and she went down there and kept them together, until she saw them grow to strong manhood and womanhood, and three of them are ministers of the gospel today. That was grit, the courage and capacity to do and endure and win the victory through

faith in God. It takes grit to fight the battle of life. It takes courage to be a faithful follower of the courageous Son of God.

This woman showed her common sense in not being offended at apparent incivility. She did not argue when Jesus declared that he came to minister only to Jews; she only cried: "Lord, help me!" She smiled, and acknowledged her unworthiness, and made it a plea, and was triumphant in her faith. The Lord Jesus could not get out of helping this woman, which was perhaps the very thing he came to do.

II. And once more, and best of all, this woman exhibited grace in her conduct. Her suffering was vicarious. She was making the sorrow of another her own. Her request was unselfish; she came on behalf of another, her daughter; how could Christ possibly turn her away on such a plea! Sorrow makes the poorest lips eloquent; love breaks down every barrier that would oppose it. To come to Christ in behalf of some one else, and to feel that the crumbs from his table are better than the luxuries from all other tables; to show our grace in the humility of our coming, and with an unwavering heart press our way into his presence and make known to him our heart's desire—that is faith, and there is only one answer to such a plea.

* * *

Someone has suggested the following homiletic analysis of this passage:

The Fourfold Victory of This Woman's Faith.

1. Over her birth—a heathen.
2. Over Christ's silence.
3. Over pride—humiliation.
4. Over the disciples' discouragement.

Christ's Fourfold Reason for Delay.

1. To emphasize the fact that he came to Israel.
2. To strengthen her faith.
3. To manifest it to those around.
4. To cause her to appreciate his gift at its true worth.

The Fourfold Encouragement Given Her.

1. She was permitted to tell her story.
2. She knew her case was given consideration.
3. She obtained personal recognition.
4. She received more than she asked for—cure and commendation.

The Fourfold Proof of the Genuineness of Her Faith.

1. Courageous public avowal of her faith in Christ.
2. Intelligent presentation of her petitions.
3. Importunity.
4. She throve on opposition.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Falling Toward the Cross (334).

Faith is "falling toward the cross."

The great, blessed, central truth of the Gospel is that truth of the Cross.

God laid our sins on Christ. Christ died for them on the Cross

Whenever, in penitence and trust, we fall toward that Cross, our whole life is thrown wide open for God's entrance, and he comes into it and begins his work of grace there, and we are saved, so that faith is the heart's vision of the cross.

A Scotchwoman was once introduced as "Mrs. ——, a woman of great faith." "No," she said, "I am a woman of little faith, but with a great God." Faith looks at the cross and realizes that the great God there pledges his willingness and power to save.

Seeing Christ's Face (335).

Robert Louis Stevenson describes a ship caught in a storm off a rocky coast, threatening death to all on board. When terror among the people was at its worst, one man, more daring than the rest, making the perilous passage to the pilot house, saw the pilot lashed to his post, with his hands on the wheel, and turning the ship little by little into the open sea. When he beheld the ghastly white, terror-stricken face of the man, he smiled, and the man rushed to the deck below shouting: "I have seen the face of the pilot, and he smiled. All is well." A sight of that smiling face averted a panic, and converted despair into hope. So a sight of the face of Christ averts a panic in life, and fills the soul with peace and hope. Therefore, to see God's face in Christ is to be at peace. "As chaos became order and beauty under the wings of the Spirit of God, and as the troubled waves of Galilee sank into calm beneath the Saviour's feet," so there can be no disquietude in his presence, beholding his face, sharing his favor.

A Faith That Endured the Test (336).

A young man was converted in a mission in Spokane. He became a preacher of righteousness, doing evangelistic work on La Grande District, Oregon. In the town where a series of meetings was being conducted lived an intellectual woman of middle age who was a skeptic, as was her father. Her mother had been a Christian, but not so strong in mind and expression as the father; for that reason the daughter clung to him and to his belief. This woman attended some of the meetings and seemed interested. She was asked by the preacher if she did not wish to become a Christian.

"No," said she, "I do not believe a word you are preaching; but I attend these sessions because I am interested in seeing what is done, and to hear what is said."

"You say you do not believe," said the earnest man. "I do not care whether or not you believe in us or in the meetings. Do you not want to know for yourself whether these things are true?"

"Why, yes, certainly," replied she; "it would satisfy my mind wonderfully."

He told her to act as if God really were present, and able to understand her desire. So he encouraged her to pray; but she got no lighter heart, but instead a heavier one. She went home and had the usual experiences of a seeker—unable to eat, sleep, work, converse, or act otherwise than absent-mindedly as to things of earth. The next afternoon she was standing looking out of the window when peace came. She told it at the next night's meeting.

"Now," said she, "I'm going to tell my father. He lives in Northern Idaho, and I know there'll be something doing when he hears of this. He ever regarded me as too strong in mind to believe such 'folly.' I will tell him mother was right and he was wrong."

"Is your mother living?"

"No; mother has been dead many years."

"How old is your father?"

"Seventy-six; but I am going to write him at once."

She did so. The letter was followed in thought till she knew he had had time to get it. Then she timed the reply, believing he would write immediately. So accurate was her guessing that she even met the stage on which the answer would reach her post office, and was there to receive it; but he did not write. She had no letter by that stage. But, when the passengers got off at the postoffice, there, to her astonishment, was the father, who had to go all the long way to see what silliness had persuaded his intellectual daughter to believe in the story of Jesus Christ.

When she saw him she said: "Papa, it's true. Mother was right and you were wrong. I know for myself that Jesus is alive, and he is able to hear and to answer prayer."

The result was that two nights after that the old skeptic became soundly converted. His daily testimony is clear as that of the Apostle Paul—"I know."—Western Christian Advocate.

Faith Means Confidence (337).

Faith means confidence. We shall never win in this fight without that kind of faith. We must have confidence in God, a serene and unshakable trust that infinite wisdom is planning, infinite power pushing forward, and infinite love inspiring, this great work of winning men to the true life, and thus saving the city. We say we believe that. But, oh, to believe it as Jesus did, not as an abstract proposition, but as a living, working reality; that "God is on the field" and that he will win; that there is something greater than this mighty city of ours, its gigantic buildings, its immense business interests, its masses of men; that our God is greater; that all this is child play to him; put such faith as that to work in the lives of Christian men and women, and a potent force would be set in action that would level the mountain of difficulty as surely and as swiftly as the power of the United States has cut through the Culebra range at Panama.

Once when the cause of the Reformation looked hopeless, when few kept the faith, and foes were many and strong, Luther, talking with Melancthon, suddenly said, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, and, as they sang the strong words, 'A mighty fortress is our God,'" they felt a power with them greater than any force their enemies could put forth. God gives his church that sterling confidence in him that makes the heart brave and the arm strong to move mountains and achieve the impossible. This is God's work and he will do it; such is the faith that means victory.—William Pierson Merrill, D.D.

Wesley's Faith (338). "My brother Charles, amid the difficulties of our early ministry, used to say, 'If the Lord would give me wings I would fly.' I used to answer, 'If the Lord bid me fly, I should trust him for the wings.'"—John Wesley.

XLV. PRAYER'S SURE ANSWER.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them."—Matthew 18:19.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

As a clear setting forth of the spirit of this text the following summary by the Rev. Ira Barnett is a model:

Martin Luther, the titanic man who, under God, "broke the spell of ages and laid nations subdued at the foot of the cross," was the man who said: "I have so much work to do today that I cannot get along on less than three hours of prayer." We can hardly think too highly of the apostolic ministries of John Wesley, but I fear that we seldom rightly appraise the significance of those early hours of prayer each day wherein this dynamic life was charged with its spiritual power. John Knox saved Scotland. It was his prayers that terrified the tyrannical Mary. We are told that the study walls of Richard Baxter were stained with prayer breath. No wonder Kidderminster had such a wonderful evangelist-pastor. David Brainerd prayed with a passion that few men have ever known; the savages of a wild to whom he went soon became communities of splendid Christian men and women. And William Carey and Henry Martyn and Robert Murray McCheyne and others who have helped to stamp missions on every page of the last century's history learned through the journal of this flaming soul the secret of that prayer life that made them such mighty agencies in extending Christ's kingdom. The revival under Jonathan Edwards in the eighteenth century began with his famous call to prayer. It was in the Haystack Prayer Meeting at Williams College that Mills and Judson were born into the missionary life and the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions was born into Christian history. Moody was successful as an evangelist when the Christian people prayed; he failed when they didn't. Our New Testament tells us that the first home mission revival, Pentecost, followed a ten days' prayer meeting, and that the first foreign missionary enterprise had its rise in a prayer service at Antioch, Syria.

Can we not as followers of Christ learn the lesson of inspiration and all Christian history—that it is the praying Church that is the conquering Church always, and none other?

* * *

In preaching on "The Reasonableness of Prayer," Rev. S. Van R. Trowbridge said: Unless we are willing to study in the school of Christ, we cannot expect to understand the power and the harmony of prayer. But as we advance in proficiency of character prayer becomes more and more reasonable. We learn to use the instrument. Prayer ceases to be a foreign mystery and becomes a familiar relationship, clear in its logic and deep in its conviction. Now let us face those arguments which have cut the nerve of prayer in so many lives.

I. "You cannot change the mind of God." But do you think that God has determined just what he will do with your life in all the moments of the future, without any reference to your attitude and the de-

cisions of your will? God has certain unchangeable principles of truth and integrity, certain sublime purposes of love and fatherly compassion which he can never alter. But his method of dealing with a man varies and halts and progresses with the moods and with the behavior of the man. If the man shows responsiveness and readiness God's blessing comes into his life. If he asks, along the line of God's eternal purposes, he receives. If he seeks, he finds. If he knocks it is opened unto him.

II. Another argument which attempts to negative prayer is that nature and mankind are under certain scientific laws with which God will not interfere. The man who takes this attitude fails to recognize the principle that when two laws bear upon a given case the higher law must control the lower. And in our human life there are certain spiritual laws which are superior to the material laws described by the sciences. When a moral purpose is to be achieved the highest law must operate, even if the lower law is for the moment suspended or overruled.

III. The assumption is made that if God answers your prayer he will show partiality to you and thus wrong your neighbor. You are represented as the favored child, and thus an attempt is made to distort the fairness and justice of God. Does not God cause his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust? Then why expect any special favors at his hand? In reply to this I would simply say that in all true prayer we must include our neighbors. How can we expect God to bless our lives if we are not continually seeking the advantage and the happiness of others? Ask God to give you more self-control, more nobility of character, more Christlikeness of spirit. Ask him to give your neighbor the same. There is no attempt at favoritism in such prayer.

IV. But what will God do if you pray for one thing and your enemy prays for just the opposite? This was the problem that suggested itself time and time again to the mind of Abraham Lincoln as the men of the Confederate and Union armies lifted up their prayers to God by the campfires on both sides of the Potomac. But the comforting thought must come to us, as it came to him, that in the end "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." My neighbor may be right and I may be wrong, or the reverse may be true. But in any case the patient justice of God can never be led astray. And even if a sword shall pierce my heart may God give me grace to see that his answer to my prayer is better than the one which I desired!

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Answered Prayer (339).

He asked for strength that he might achieve; he was made weak that he might obey.

He asked for health that he might do greater things; he was given infirmity that he might do better things.

He asked for riches that he might be happy; he was given poverty that he might be wise.

He asked for power that he might have the praise of men; he was given weakness that he might feel the need of God.

He asked for all things that he might enjoy life; he was given Life that he might enjoy all things.

He has received nothing that he asked for, all that he hoped for. His prayer is answered. He is most blest.—Congregationalist.

Stonewall Jackson's Testimony (340).

"I have so fitted the habit in my mind that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without asking God's blessing; never seal a letter without putting a word of prayer under the seal; never take a letter from the post without a brief sending of my thoughts heavenward; never change my classes in the lecture room without a minute's petition for the cadets who go out and those who come in."

Prayer Effective (341).

In 1799, when the armies of Napoleon were sweeping over the Continent, Massena, one of his generals, suddenly appeared on the heights above the little town of Feldkirk, on the frontier of Austria, with an army of 18,000 men. It was Easter Day, and as the morning sun glittered upon the weapons of the French, the town council hastily assembled to consult what was to be done. Should a deputation be sent to Massena, with the keys of the town, and an entreaty for mercy, or should they attempt resistance? Then the old dean of the church stood up and said: "This is Easter Day. We have been counting on our own strength, and that fails. This is the day of our Lord's Resurrection. Let us ring the bells and have service as usual, and leave the matter in God's hands. We know only our weakness and not the power of God." Soon all at once from three or four church towers the bells began to chime joyous peals in honor of the day, and the streets were filled with worshippers hastening to the house of God. The French heard with surprise and alarm the sudden clangor of joy bells, and concluded that the Austrian army had arrived in the night to relieve the place. Massena broke up his camp and before the bells had ceased ringing the Frenchmen were departing.

"Shut the Door" (342).

A man was standing in a telephone box trying to talk, but he could not make out the message. He kept saying: "I can't hear, I can't hear." The other man by and by said sharply: "If you'll shut the door you can hear." The door was not shut, and he could hear, not only the man's voice, but the street and shop noises too! A great many Christians are going lean and hungry on the way, because they do not shut the door more frequently that shuts them up with God, and silences for a while the din of worldliness. Jesus makes the shut door the condition of peculiar blessings from God.—Selected.

The Higher and Lower Laws (343).

A boy and a girl are crossing the Atlantic in a steamer. They find themselves far out at sea and the question arises, "Who makes the vessel go?" The girl is quite confident that the captain on the bridge makes the vessel go. She cannot prove it, but she believes it. The boy looks over the steamer and becomes confident that the captain is too far from the whirling engines to really make them go. The girl tries to point out that the captain rules and controls in many ways. The boy doubts the real authority and power of the captain. One day the cry is

heard, "Man overboard!" At once the captain rings the bell down in the engineroom, the steamer stops, the engines are reversed, a boat is lowered, and after a diligent search the drowning man is rescued. The higher authority to reverse the movement of the ship was all the time resident in the captain, for he is responsible for the life of all the passengers. But that higher law was not called into operation until the emergency arose. The mere mechanical law of the steam and the machinery were secondary to the will of the captain. The girl had been right in her faith. The boy had been mistaken in his doubts.

So it is in the realm of prayer. A young man has left home and is leading a wastrel's life. He is engaging in crooked business dealings. He is beginning to drink. His mother prays ardently and with tears for his rescue. The ordinary laws of nature would surely indicate that he will soon wreck his life. He is the man who has fallen overboard and unless the engines are reversed there is no hope for him. But just then an old friend looks up the spendthrift and leads him back to a worthy and pure life. Do you say that the hand of God is not in that work of rescue? Do you dare to say that the mother's prayer had nothing to do with it? There is no conflict in the laws of God. The higher law quietly and immediately controls the lower law, as when the pressure of the captain's hand reversed the movement of the ship and saved the life of a man.—Trowbridge.

The Power of Prayer (344).

A girl whom I know well was in a boat on the Solent with two or three young men. The boat was swept away by the current, and no exertions of the rowers could get it back to shore. There was no help in sight. Suddenly the girl proposed prayer. With the glad consent of the others she knelt in the boat and asked for deliverance. When they opened their eyes, there was a man-o-war's long-boat coming towards them; and the sturdy rowers took the helpless boat to the ship, and finally restored the distressed crew to the shore. Now, it was asked, how could that prayer have caused the opportune arrival of that long-boat? But God, working in the tides and currents of the sea, was working also in the minds of the officers and men of H. M. ship. The impulse which ordered the boat to go from the ship's side, the impulse which directed the course and brought the boat within hail of those in distress, and all the subtle influences which go to determine the actions of men, bringing one definite concrete fact out of a wide choice of possibilities, were all effected, through God, by that effectual fervent prayer.

Whenever, then, we give ourselves to intercession even for people unknown or far away, as we enter into the exercise of believing prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we actually bring to bear an availing force on the situation.

Away in foreign lands, they wondered how
  Their simple word had power;
At home the Christians two or three had met
  To pray an hour.

—R. F. Horton, D.D.

XLVI. SPIRITUAL ALERTNESS.

"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."—Matthew 25:13.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. J. Greenough comments on this need of vigilance as a safeguard against worldliness as follows:

We do conform to the world unless there is incessant and prayerful effort to pursue a nobler and more independent course. Conformity is easy. It is gliding softly with the stream. It calls for no moral resistance. To do as the great majority do, to follow the fashion of the day, to catch the fever which is in the air, to form our habits according to the pattern of our class or set, to be just as religious or irreligious as those among whom we move, to run after the pleasures and strive for the gains on which the great crowd about us sets its heart—all that needs no prayer, no self-repression, or soul energy of any kind. The veriest spiritual drowsiness is capable of this. One needs to have the spirit thoroughly awakened by God, to refuse conformity. For a young man to say, I will not live the life of the frivolous, pleasure-loving, God-forgetting youths about me; for a business man to say, I will follow no doubtful devices, however much they are the custom of the business world; for a woman to say, I will live for Christ, and not for the frivolities of the season; for a religious man to say, I will hold aloof from scenes where conscience would be offended, though the generality of the religious world pronounces them proper—I will not be content with the things that bring content to the crowd; I will give my chief thought to the higher prizes of life—all that requires a brave heart, a will strengthened from above, a spirit disciplined and nerved by daily prayer and conscious walk with God. Those who do this are indeed God's elect. They are no more clay, but the strong men of the world, animated by the quenchless force and spirit of the Almighty; not moulded by the fashion of the world, but patterns and leaders that God gives to the world to shape it in better ways. Ah! we need to be stronger than the strong, we need to lay fast hold upon the heavenly power and love, if we are to carry out in any measure this injunction: "Be ye not conformed to this world."

* * *

On this subject of "Watchfulness," Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods said: The fisherman's wife who spends her time on the pier-heads watching for the boats, cannot be so well prepared to give her husband a comfortable reception as the woman who is busy about her household work, and only now and again turns a longing look seaward. None of the virgins were on the watch for the bridegroom, but some of them were nevertheless prepared for his coming. It is impossible for us to be always looking out for the coming of Christ, but it is quite possible to be always prepared for his coming.

* * *

And Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett said: Our life now may be a level, regular road; but tomorrow the character of the road will be changed, and we

shall be confronted by some great and unusual task. What shall we do? Tomorrow I may come into the presence of sickness. I may approach the shadow of calamity, I may come within the chill and loneliness of bereavement. I may meet King Death himself, the king of terrors, the shadow feared of man. Sickness, calamity, bereavement, death! These are inevitable. What shall I do? How shall I prepare for them?

The best preparation for the morrow is quiet attention to today.

"I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee."

I must engage in the practice of trusting God in every passing moment of my life. What is this that is nearest to me? What is this duty? What is this task? What is this immediate trouble? Just here and now let me trust in God. Let me turn this present moment into happy confidence, and in this very season let me hold communion with my God. Let me fill the present with holy faith, and the changes that will surely come I shall not fear to see. In my trifles I can prepare for emergencies. Along a commonplace road I can get ready for the hill. In the green pastures and by the still waters I can prepare myself for the valley of the shadow. For when I reach the hill, the shadow, the emergency, I shall be God-possessed: He will dwell in me. Put your trust in the Lord and you will live well in the immediate present; live well in the immediate present and the emergency will not affright you.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Master Is Coming (346).

The coming of Christ is certainly not a time when he draws near to the world, for he is in the world always. It must be, then, some time or times in which his presence becomes manifest. Of such comings there are several. Men discuss which of them the text refers to—whether to the final coming for judgment, the coming to every man at death, or the coming of the Spirit at man's conversion. Let us not try to settle which it means. It cultivates the life of watchfulness within us, not to know when Christ is coming to judge the world, when he is coming to call us to himself by death, when he is coming by some great experience to our souls.

Surely it is a blessed Father who lets us know that he is coming, but does not tell us when. We are like little children off at school, to whom the father sends word that he will bring them home, that so they may study all the harder and be ready, but does not fix the day lest they should drop their books altogether and merely stand looking for him out of the window, wasting their time. God will bring the shortness of life home to all of us so as to make us say, "We will work the harder," but he will not let it weigh upon any of us to set us thinking, "It is not worth while to work."—Phillips Brooks.

Now! (347).

I went out from Dayton, Ohio, some time ago, to preach in a little country church. When I gave the invitation I was almost surprised to find thirty-five people come to the front. I was just about to leave the meeting to hurry into the city for another service, when I said, "Is there not another?" and away back against the wall an old man rose, about

eighty-five years old. His hair was gray and thin, his back was bent, his step was tottering, as he leaned upon his stick. When he reached the front, he dropped his stick and took my hand in his, saying, "I thought it might be my last chance," and he dropped upon his knees. But do not imagine for a moment that the last chance comes only at eighty-five. It may come now—Now!

When Mr. Moody was conducting a mission like this in England, night after night a man came into the audience. He was a Cornish miner. One night as Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were leaving the platform, they noticed him sitting under the gallery with a friend. Mr. Moody made his way over to him, and said to him, "Why are you here every night and why are you waiting?" He replied, "Sir, I said to my companion, 'I will never leave this building until I am saved.'" Mr. Moody that night led him to Christ. The next day there was an explosion in one of the mines, and many men were taken out, bruised, and bleeding and dying. This man was among the wounded, and when they bent down he was fast passing away. When they took water to wash away the dirt from his face, he opened his eyes. His friend of the previous night was kneeling at his side, and the Cornish miner who was saved the night before was saying, "Jem, it is a good thing I settled it last night." And he was gone. Oh, it would be a great thing for you to settle it now, while yet there is hope. The door of mercy is open. I bid you enter in.—Chapman.

We Haven't Much Time (348).

This may be the last year of your life.

We haven't much time. You cannot stay here long; you have got to go quickly; pretty soon you will be gone, and your hands will rest for a million years. Work hard. Don't whine because you have work; but thank God you have the chance to do it. Be so honorable in the world's industry, and so eager to serve, that you will covet the hours you sleep.

Pretty soon it will be time to stop; and a strange visitor will come by, and say: "Quit work!" You will say: "It is not night." But he will persist—"Quit work!"

"It is only two o'clock; I have only just begun for the afternoon."

"Quit work!"

"It is not sundown yet; may I not work till night?"

"Quit work!"

And you will lay down your hammer on the anvil, with your hands black with the grime of the smithy, and you will go out with him, and he will say to you: "It is time to quit work."

And you will say: "Will I be back in the morning?"

"No, not in the morning."

"Will I be back tomorrow?"

"No, not tomorrow."

"Where are you taking me?"

"I am taking you to a land very far off, and from whose 'bourne no traveler ever returns.' Come along. This is the way."

"Can't I go back once?"

"No," and somehow there is a little sternness in his voice.

But you will say: "I must go back a minute, only a minute, just once, to tell—"

"No, come on!"

O, who is it? It is the master, Death. You cannot go back—not for a minute; no, you might just as well ask for a century as for a minute. Suddenly it will be pitch dark and Death will be gone, and you will be gone!

Pray God that, when you get there, Christ will be with you, lest you perish in solitude.—Bishop Quayle.

Almost In and Yet Lost (349).

The "Royal Charter" had been around the world and was at last homeward bound. She had reached Queenstown, and then sailed for Liverpool; the message was telegraphed to Liverpool that she was almost home. Dr. William M. Taylor, a great New York preacher, was then in Liverpool as pastor, and the wife of the first mate of the "Royal Charter" was a member of his church. You may remember that the "Royal Charter" never came into Liverpool. An officer of my church told me that he waited on the dock all night, straining his eyes to catch a first glimpse of the vessel. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool was there. Bands of musicians and thousands of people waited to give her a welcome home. But the "Royal Charter" never came in. She went down in the night with almost all on board. They came to Dr. Taylor, and said, "Will you go and tell the wife of the first mate?" So he started off to tell her. As he laid his hand upon the door bell the door flew open, and a little girl sprang out, crying, "Oh, Dr. Taylor, I thought it was my papa. He is coming home today." The preacher said he felt like an executioner as he walked into the house. He found the table laid for breakfast, and the wife of the first mate stepped forward, her face shining, as she said, "Dr. Taylor, this is indeed a privilege, and if you will wait a little while, perhaps you will sit at our table with us, for my husband was on the 'Royal Charter,' and he is coming home."

Dr. Taylor says he looked at her a moment, while he steadied himself and held on to a near-by chair and then said, "Poor woman, your husband will never come home. The 'Royal Charter' went down last night, and your husband is lost." He says that she threw her hands to her head, staggered for a moment, and then fell, and as she fell she cried, "O my God, so near home and lost." Yes, and some of you are as near as that. Near by a mother's pleading; near by the minister's preaching; near by the missioner's singing. You are almost in. God keep you from rejecting him. How far one may go towards home and still fall away!—J. W. Chapman.

XLVII. WHEN WORK BECOMES WORSHIP.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matthew 25:40.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Russell H. Conwell, in speaking of Christ's final reward of faithful service, said: When the time comes for him who has done good deeds to be received into the New Jerusalem, do you suppose he will go crawling up the stairs? Does the Bible tell us that the Christian will be received in that way?

As the old Roman conquerors came back from the East, and brought with them the trophies of their victories, and marched through Rome, with their chariots, while their countrymen crowded the pavements, and welcomed them with music on every side and every indication of joy, so will the Christian be welcomed into the New Jerusalem; God and Christ and all the people who have gone before will welcome him. Ah! what a triumphal march that will be! One comes out to the front and says, "He is come. Why, I should not have been in heaven but for him!" And another says, "He is come! The one who divided his portion with me!" "The one who established the school where I was educated!" "The one who helped the nation into liberty, and made it possible for me to worship God!" "He is come!" "He is come!" All through that magnificent city it will resound,—to the throne of God himself. And he who has done his duty, and has done good deeds, and has worked faithfully, because of his love for Christ and God, will be received with all the triumph of heaven, and all the anthems of its beautiful music will be sounding his praise, and he will be known to all the city as one who has done something good, for the sake of, and in the name of, and for the cause of, Jesus Christ.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Life of Faithful Service (350).

A merry crowd of young people had run over in a launch that clear August morning to visit the North Island light. They scrambled laughingly up the rocky path and then stood breathless, looking across the desolate pile of rocks, softened only by a few huckleberry bushes, and stunted firs. That was not quite all, either; for in a sheltered angle of the house, was a tiny garden of portulaca, marigolds, and zinnias.

The keeper and his wife and son met the visitors—the two men with a courtesy none the less genuine because it was silent, the little gray-haired woman with vivid interest. The eagerness in her bright, dark eyes appealed irresistibly to one of the girls. She dropped behind as the crowd trooped after the men, and turned back to the little woman.

"I've seen lights before," she said. "I wonder if you'd let me come in and make you a little call instead?"

She was almost startled at the sudden illumination of the old face.

"Would I let you, dearie? I guess you don't know what it's like to live on a rock. I tell father and William the only time I envy them is

when visitors come, and go tagging off after them. Most always they have to hurry right off as soon as they've seen the light, and I scarcely get a look at them."

The girl leaned forward, moved by a sudden impulse.

"How do you endure it?" she asked. "They have the light, of course; but you, off here alone—O, I don't see how you endure it!"

The wise old eyes met the young blue ones with quiet humor. "O, there's lots of ways of enduring," the keeper's wife said. "I think of farmers' wives as far off from folks as I am, with only land all around them. I was born in sight of the sea, and it doesn't seem to me I could live away from it. Then I belong to the light, too—you have to if you keep one; and if I don't touch the lamp, I cook for the men that do, and that counts. They'd get blue and queer in a hurry if they had to do for themselves. I guess that's the real secret of it. You don't get very much out of sorts as long as you've got somebody to do for—and I guess most people have that, if they'd only realize it."

The girl drew a long breath. "Thank you," she said, "It is a real and very helpful lighthouse sermon."—Classmate.

The Christ Life (351).

There was a sweet-faced Salvation Army lassie, with a remarkable endowment of power to stir and uplift multitudes. She was requested to come and speak to the students of Chicago University. Her "scoop" bonnet concealed a scar where once she had been hit by a brick from the hand of some one in an angry mob. She told the simple story of her work. She talked about the dens and dives in which the Salvation Army lassies went to nurse the sick, scrub floors, feed the hungry, cheer the sad. She pictured the pathos of the people's lives, their heartaches, their misery. Then she told why she pitied them, and ministered to them —because she was constrained by One who spent his earthly life going about among the miserable, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, touching blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, and gladdening burdened hearts. She did not weep, but her hearers did. The hard-headed students and iceberg professors were melted by the simplicity and earnestness of her story, and the verdict of the university audience was that, without trying to do it, she had eclipsed all the great orators who had preceded her on that platform. But it was not her words alone; it was her life, so thoroughly given up to saving others that Christ spoke through her. She was Maude Ballington Booth, a woman with the heroic, unselfish spirit of Esther.

Ministering to Christ Through Men (352).

Jesus is not visibly with us today. But everyone to whom we can minister, everyone who needs our help, stands before us as Christ's representative, and if we give that help from love to Christ, the Master accepts it as though it was done directly to him. This is the very essence of religion—ministering to men with the love of God impelling us to it.

For the Good of Our Fellows (353).

There is a growing sense, especially among our thoughtful men and women, that first of all their talents and their labors should be given to

the good of their fellows, and only secondarily for the accumulation of money and fortune. An interesting example of this is given in Munsey's Magazine, in an article headed, "Two Famous American Surgeons." These surgeons are the two Mayo brothers, in the small town of Rochester, Minn. They are so noted that students come from all quarters of our land and from abroad to witness their marvelous surgery. These are all welcome to witness their work. "The Mayos talk while they operate. Every incision, the applications used, the whys and wherefores are fully explained to the students, who have, perhaps, traveled thousands of miles to learn, for the Mayos have no secrets in their profession. They are working for humanity, and what knowledge they have gained of their life-giving art they freely pass to their brothers."

It is the true spirit, one which we all honor. It is the spirit of the Christian. The more we can do for the good of our fellows, the more we will commend the Lord whom we love. Men care little for wordy professions, but much for actions. Deeds of Christlike service for others witness for him powerfully among men.

"The Least of These" (354).

D. L. Moody was sitting in his study when a stranger appeared, and introduced himself as a convict, having just served out his time in the penitentiary. He was in the world without friends or employment, and he had come to ask aid of the evangelist. Moody's little daughter coming into the room, she was told to go and kiss the stranger, which she did. Dinner being announced, he was invited by Mr. Moody to partake with him. Under a sense of his unworthiness he declined, but finally yielded. The kiss of the innocent child and the Christly kindness of her father made, it is said, a new man of him.

Too Great to Serve? (355).

A certain young minister in his first parish was hard put to it to find teachers enough for the Sabbath School. So he went over the list of church members until he came to the name of Judge Andrews, who was considered the most learned lawyer in the State.

After some days the young minister found courage to call upon the judge.

"I have come to see you," he said, "about a class of boys in the Sabbath School. They have recently lost their teacher, and I wish you would take them."

"What! I take a class of boys in the Sabbath School?"

"Yes, sir. You could hold the boys. They all respect you greatly. You have no idea what a hero you are to them."

"But—but—I teach a class of boys? No, no. I could not! It's a very busy term of court."

"But it is the busy people, judge, who do the best work, and we need a splendid teacher for that class. Won't you try it?"

"Couldn't think of it. No, no, I couldn't, possibly."

And the judge closed the interview rather abruptly.

But the Sabbath morning the minister was surprised to receive a call from Judge Andrews. He began with strange hesitation:

"I have called to say that—I would try that class. I thought it all out

after you left. It was sheer pride that made me refuse. I thought I was too great a man to teach a class of boys. I tell you, sir, I am a hypocrite. I have tried to play the 'distinguished Christian gentleman,' and I have been worthless in the kingdom. Put me to work. I do not know how to teach boys. I am too ignorant. But I mean to learn."

At the close of the first year in the Sabbath School, Judge Andrews said to the minister: "Teaching that class has been the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I never had any definition of service before. I shall never cease to thank God for opening my eyes to see myself as I really was."—Youth's Companion.

Helpfulness (356).

When we begin to be like God we begin to be helpful. We think we love each other, but the love is only a mere sentiment until it has been wrought into sacrificial act, into service which costs. Personal helpfulness is the test as well as the measure of the quality of the mind of Christ that is in us. Evermore people need to be helped. This does not mean that we are to carry their burdens, pay their debts, do their work, fight their battles. Such helpfulness does harm rather than good. We help others truly when we make them strong and brave, that they may carry their own burdens and meet their own struggles. Helpfulness should cheer, encourage, inspire, impart larger visions and greater hope and confidence. There are men everywhere who are pressed, beleaguered, ready to sink down and perish, whom strong brotherly sympathy would save. They are in sorrow, disappointment has staggered them, or they have been defeated in their purposes. To be able to help these is the highest service we can render in this world. "To be a strong hand in the dark to another in the time of need," says Hugh Black, "to be a cup of strength to a human soul in a crisis of weakness, is to know the glory of life." There would seem to be no limit to the possibilities of this higher helpfulness. The true Christian life is reached by the emptying of self and the filling of the emptiness with Christ. When Christ is in us we are able to help others with his strength.

Rewards of Service (357).

A gentle, sweet-voiced woman of seventy, born and bred in an English town, has told this story of her youth and age:

"I left school at sixteen. My mother was wise enough to take advantage of my zeal for helping folk, and to direct it. She set me to teach some children who came to our house three evenings a week for an hour. Presently some of the mothers, who could not read or write, joined my class. I taught them a little sewing and cooking as well as the three R's. In four years there were about twenty children and women who had learned something in that small, primitive evening school.

"Then I married and went to America to live. Years passed, and my only daughter grew up, married an Englishman, and found her home in my old English town. Then came the wonder. My daughter was speedily surrounded by a group of loyal, although humble friends. My few seeds of teaching have come back to my daughter and her children in an abundant harvest of gratitude and service. In the years that have elapsed since my daughter's marriage, the comfort of her little family

and often its safety have rested in the hands of these devoted women. The hours of that evening school were the best investment I ever made from a worldly point of view, and judged by spiritual standards, they have brought me a fortune."—Youth's Companion.

Toiling For Humanity For Christ (358).

The hand, more than any other part of the body, reveals its owner. A bit of skin displaced, the new takes on the old lines—markings so reliable that the "thumb mark" has come to have a place of scientific accuracy in our penal systems. We read that Napoleon, as all the Bonapartes, had perfectly modeled hands; that Nero, long after he had murdered his mother, caught sight of some beautiful hands which stirred a memory. "Of whose did they remind him? Ah, yes! his mother's!" He put his hands over his eyes, and shuddered away—let us hope, from the foul deed.

There is, in all the world, nothing so beautiful as a mother's hands. But theirs need not be, rarely is, the faultless white perfection of an Agrippina. The tracings of loving care and toil, the parchment quality of faithfulness to humdrum task—this it is that ennobles and makes sacredly beautiful many a pair of twisted misshapen hands.

Perhaps the best known hands in the world are those "Praying Hands" so freely displayed in the quaint old city of Nuremberg, where in a house still standing, sketched and painted one Albert Durer. The story goes that a monk, possibly his own brother, stood watching him as he filled his canvas with beauty. He threw up his hands in an attitude of adoration, saying humbly, "Ah, brother, if only I could paint like that."

"Brother," said Durer, "if only my hands showed, as do yours, that I had toiled for humanity." He left off painting, and fell to sketching rapidly the hands and the loosely turned-back cuffs of the man's robe. Such hands Savonarola must have had. Madonnas and crosses and crucifixes there are in abundance, many of them marvelously beautiful; but to many those "Praying Hands" must ever remain the last word of faith and adoration. Veined, ascetic, slenderly tapering, they tell of flesh subdued, of peace through travail, of "I believe! help Thou my unbelief."—Morrison.

XLVIII. SACRIFICING SELF FOR CHRIST.

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."—Mark 8:34.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In preaching on this theme of "Self Denial," Rev. H. E. Manning used the following divisions:

I. In the first place, without the crossing and denying of self there can be no purifying of the moral habits. Without a true compunction and a tender conscience, purity of heart, and the energy of a devout mind set free from the thraldom of evil, no man can have fellowship with Christ, and no man can have these without self-denial.

II. And so, again, even with those who have for a while followed Christ's call, how often do we see the fairest promise of a high and elevated life marred for want of constancy. They had no endurance, for they had no self-denial. A self-sparing temper will make a man not only an utter contradiction to his Lord, but even to himself.

III. Without self-denial there can be no real cleaving of the moral nature to the will of God. I say that, to distinguish between a passive and seeming attachment and the conscious energetic grasp of will by which Christ's true disciples cleave to their Master's service.

IV. We have need to ask ourselves: 1. In what do we deny ourselves? It would be very hard for most men to find out what one thing, in all the manifold actions of their daily life, they either do or leave undone, simply for Christ's sake. 2. And if we cannot find anything in which we deny ourselves already, we must needs resolve on something in which we may deny ourselves henceforward. In things lawful and innocent, and, it may be, gainful and honorable and in keeping with our lot in life; and such things as the world, by its own measure, esteems to be necessary things; we may really try ourselves, we may find matter for self-denial.

* * *

Ambrose Shepherd, D.D., said: The earth, says John Ruskin, is full of lost powers. No soul perishes, he goes on to say, but if we could only read its true history we should find that not a thousandth part of its possible work had been done. Allowing for the characteristic way of putting this statement, there is truth in it. How many of us know that what we are, at what we are pleased to call our best, is but an installment of what we might be by an honest response of the moral will to the offer of Divine grace and help? This does not mean that we are to seek hardships, to impose sacrifices upon ourselves, or to choose for ourselves a difficult and perilous path and insist upon taking that path. We are not asked to willfully add to our burden, or shrink from such relief as the providence of life places within our reach and evidently intends us to accept. For the admonition, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" simply means: Detach yourselves from the spirit of the world

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Things to be Given Up (359).

"Just what things must I give up?" To this the Bible answer is that you must surrender everything that hinders your growth in grace. If certain practices, or an attendance upon certain places, hinders your spiritual progress, then be done with them! Wherever there is doubt in your mind in regard to an amusement, give your Master the benefit of the doubt, and stay out of it. Just on this doubtful territory it is that we see so many unhappy falls. We also firmly believe that Christians ought to surrender very often their rights to lawful things; for by so doing they may remove stumbling blocks out of the path of others, and strengthen their own graces. The Greek racer denied himself many lawful indulgences. So should a follower of Jesus whenever self-denial will increase his spiritual sinew. Too much is said in these days against "asceticism;" but the danger of the Church does not lie in that direction. Satin cloaks are more in vogue than "hair shirts."

Daily food is a lawful indulgence. But fasting is sometimes profitable for both body and soul. Many luxuries of domestic life are lawful in themselves; to give them up in order to have more money for benevolent uses, or in order to discourage social extravagances, is a dictate of pure Christianity. John Wesley had a right to own silver plate, yet he nobly refused to possess more than two or three silver spoons "while so many poor people were lacking bread?" An excellent man in my congregation sold his carriage when he found that his horses were eating up his charity-fund too fast. My friend is no ascetic. He is a very sensible and sunshiny Christian. If the same spirit which actuated him were more common in the Church, there would be fewer luxurious equipages, fewer wine bottles, fewer card tables, fewer sumptuous evening parties; but there would be more missionaries in the West, and more Bibles in China and Japan. Self-indulgence lives under the clouds. Self-denial soars above them.—Selected.

Self Denial (360).

The worm gives up its existence, and wraps itself in a cell for a brief season. It gives up its earthly enjoyment that it may become a lovely butterfly and enter into a higher existence.

All domestic animals and fowls forego their wild, personal freedom for the sake of serving man, and receive for their self-sacrifice a larger life and kinder protection.

Man is at his best when he becomes conscious of the higher life that is outside and above himself. He rises out of self when he is awakened to a consuming passion for divine living and crucifies the old self by denying it expression.

No one but Christ can lift him out of himself. Then, like the awakening chrysalis, a new and happy existence bursts upon him. Once like the worm, he was contented to live in the dust and feed on refuse. Now he soars aloft on wings of faith and obedience. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Not Counting the Cost (361).

A young woman, talking with two missionaries who had returned

from the scene of the Armenian massacres of a few years ago, asked in an awestruck tone, "But weren't you awfully afraid of being killed yourselves?"

"Ah! my dear lady," came the smiling answer, "you see that wasn't any of our lookout."

The Worst Calamity (362).

The very worst calamity, I should say, which could befall any human being would be this—to have his own way from his cradle to his grave; to have everything he liked for the asking, or even for the buying; never forced to say: "I should like that, but I can't afford it; I should like this, but I must not do it." Never to deny himself, never to exert himself, never to work, and never to want. That man's soul would be in as great danger as if he were committing great crimes.—Charles Kingsley.

Self-Giving Love (363).

Heroic Christianity loves even unto death. That is its motive, that its power; that its soul-winner. I have read of a Sunday School that was asked the question: "Where is Jesus Christ?" and that one little fellow answered: "Oh, he lives in our alley now." The alley where he lived was at one time noted for its poverty, dirt and misery; for its women quarreling, its men drinking and getting drunk, and for its children running about uncared for and sadly neglected. That was all changed in this way: A Christian woman offered her services to the minister of the parish where that alley was, in order that she might go there and help those people to become better. "You'd better not attempt to go there," said the minister; "it is a very bad district." "Then," replied the brave woman, "it must the more need our sympathy and help." And the woman went, a lady of refinement and culture, through whose influence the alley was transformed into being a clean, wholesome place instead of dirty, a place where mothers no longer quarreled, but prayed; where men were no longer drunken, but sober, and where little children, instead of being neglected, were cared for and mothered. Jesus got into those lives, and Jesus lived in that alley. It was all the result of a Christianity which must give self in loving service of otherrs and give where the "more need" was.—Rev. Thomas Nicholson.

He Saved Not Himself (364).

Shortly after the death of Phillips Brooks, his oldest brother said to Dr. McVickar, "Phillips might have saved himself, and so prolonged his life. Others do; but he was always giving himself to any who wanted him." Dr. McVickar answered, "Yes, indeed, he might have saved himself, but in doing so he would not have been Phillips Brooks. The glory of his life was that he did not save himself." Ah! the glory of any life is that it does not save itself. Like Mary, Bishop Brooks gave the best he had to God and humanity, and that is why the fragrance of his life has filled two continents with its sweetness.—The Christian Herald.

Heroes Wanted (365).

There is always a call for volunteers in every time of stress or danger. Men are needed who will look danger in the eyes and still go forward. Blindfold courage is not the sort that is wanted. The kind that

keeps on is that dauntless brand, which, knowing all about it, yet faces it serenely with simple and selfish devotion that takes account only of the thing to be accomplished. The foreman of a Chicago factory led a crowd of working girls out of a blazing building, then turned to rush back into the smoke and flame. "I think there is someone on the fourth floor!" he cried as he disappeared. A volunteer followed, but the heat and smoke became unbearable and he shouted to the foreman to come back and escape with him. "I could just see Parr through the smoke," he said afterwards; "he was going on." That is the splendid eulogy of all brave men.—Anna Burnham Bryant.

Faithful at Every Cost (366).

One day the prisoners at Andersonville were called together by the keeper, and told that if they would enlist in the Confederate army they would escape the sufferings of prison life. Soon they would be able to go home, for the Union armies were being defeated, and the war would quickly end.

Then a half-starved man said, "Mr. Officer, may I speak a word?"

Permission being given, that shadow of a man stepped to the front, faced his comrades, and exclaimed: "Attention, squad right flank, back to death! March!" The command was instantly obeyed, not a man faltered, and with resolute step those men marched back to their quarters, and some of them to death.

The world is full of people who are faithful to the interests of life. There may be nothing spectacular in their lives, but they conscientiously persevere in the routine of life's duties. Sir Walter Scott relates a touching story of an old teacher. He was fatally smitten while teaching his class. The end soon came. This faithful teacher "conceived that he was still in school, and after some expressions of approval or censure, he said: "But it grows dark—the boys may dismiss." Instantly he passed into the presence of the Great Teacher.

"Be thou faithful unto death," in position high or low, and the Master himself "will give thee a crown of life." Though life be spent in obscure service, still we may be faithful in all things.—William T. Hart, D.D.

Renouncing the Flesh (367).

Self-indulgence is the besetting sin of the times; but if you long to be a strong, athletic Christian, you must count the cost and renounce the things of the flesh. It will cost you the pulling up of some old favorite sins by the roots and cutting loose from some entangling alliances, and some sharp conflicts with the tempter; it will cost you the submitting of your will to the will of Christ; but you will gain more than you ever gave up.—Theodore L. Cuyler.

XLIX. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."—Mark 12:30.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Bishop W. F. Anderson, in preaching on this "Love as an Uplifting Power," developed the following points:

I. God always provides an environment for every form of life which he creates. The environment for our physical lives is the free air which we breathe. Love is meant to be the universal environment of the life of mankind, and one of the chief reasons why up to this time the members of the human family have not more largely entered into their divine estate is in the fact that up to this time in the progress of the world society fails so largely to provide God's environment for the life of man as it is found in the law of love. The solution of the problems of modern society is to be found in the acceptance of the great divine doctrine of human brotherhood. Upon his arrival in this country as ambassador from Great Britain, Mr. Bryce sent word back that he had arrived in a country where business is king. The Church of Jesus Christ is set in the midst of these relationships to so permeate our life and so fashion our institutions that we shall bring in the regnancy of love everywhere.

II. But God's love is also the interpreter of the life of man. No one can see very far into any subject until he comes to love that subject. The principle of the understanding of character is to be found in the magic power of love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." It would be a logical contradiction to suppose that a loveless being could interpret a loving God. We learn much from God by the study of nature, and much more by the study of his revealed will, but the highest visions of the unspeakable loveliness of the divine character are revealed to us as we love our way into the great deep things of his own eternal life.

III. God's love is also the endowment of the life of mankind. Love in some form is natural to man; he is bound to love something. The problem of his life is to direct his capacities for love along the highest lines; and if we only understood more clearly that as inevitably as the needle points to the pole one becomes like that which he loves, we would be far more careful in the choice of the objects of our love. The significance of the great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" is in the fact that when one begins to love God he begins to grow like God. There is a very essential difference between the natural love and the Christ love. The natural love loves its own by kindred, by congeniality, by taste, loves that that is loving and lovely and lovable; but the Christ love overleaps all these distinctions and loves the unloving, the unlovely, and the unlovable, in order that by loving them it may lift them up. Human life never becomes redemptive in quality until it partakes of the sacrificial quality shown forth so beautifully in the life of our Lord. As one enters into the Christ life he may feel that he is living

God's life with God. Certainly there is nothing that can give such transcendent dignity and significance to life as to live essentially the life which God lives.

* * *

Prof. Henry Drummond in his remarkable address on "Love," concluded it by saying:

The life of love is an eternal life; and there is no worse fate can befall a man than to live and grow old alone, unloving and unloved. To be lost is to live in an unregenerate condition, loveless and unloved; and to be saved is to love—for God is love. So that this thing is worth doing. It is worth giving time to. No man can become a saint in his sleep; and to fulfill the condition requires a certain amount of prayer and meditation and time, just as improvement in any direction, bodily or mental, requires a certain amount of preparation and time. Address yourselves to that one thing, and have this supreme thing engraven upon your character. You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out above everything else are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love. "He that loveth is born of God;" and above all the transitory pleasures of life there stand forward those supreme moments when we have been enabled to do kindnesses to those around about us. I have seen almost all the beautiful things God has made; I have enjoyed almost every pleasure that God has planned for man; and yet I can look back, and I see standing out above all the life that has gone four or five short experiences when the love of God reflected itself in some poor imitation, some small act of love of mine; and that is the thing that I get comfort from now.

And let me remind you that in the book of Matthew, where the great judgment day is depicted for us in the imagery of One seated upon a throne and dividing the sheep from the goats, the test of a man then is not "How have I believed?" but "How have I loved?" The test of religion—the final test of religion—is not religiousness, but love.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Master Motive (368).

Love is the master motive in the achievement of the Christ-life, because without its kindly and exalting influence all other motives tarnish and grow dull. The gifts of prophecy, and eloquence, and science, and charity, and even self-sacrifice, are dependent upon the inspiring influence of the Christ love.

The Christ love is the master motive because of its restraints. It is the master motive because of its heroisms. It is the master motive because of its permanence. The Christ love holds us back from doing and thinking and feeling a great many things that we would otherwise rush into. The Christ love also inspires us to attempt tasks which appear to be beyond our strength and which would otherwise entirely discourage us. The Christ love abides as the permanent dynamic, when earthly things decay and change. The restraints and the heroisms and the permanence of love combine to show that it is the master motive, the one prevailing power which will give us victory in temptation and progress in our pilgrimage toward God.—Rev. S. Van R. Trowbridge.

Love Is the Heat of the Universe (369).

Philosophers tell us that without heat the universe would die. And love in the moral universe is what heat is in the natural world. It is the great germinating power. It is the ripening influence. It is the power by which all things are brought steadily up from lower to higher forms.—Beecher.

"The Lever of Affection" (370).

Dr. Martineau says, "There are cases of minds that out of the thought of self can do nothing; but, press the lever of their affections, and, though it seems to have nothing whereon to rest, you will move their world."

Now, that leads many of us into a cul de sac. "Be pure and ye shall know the love of God." What is the use of that, if we first need the impulse of the love in order to be pure? Ah! but there is an escape! How? Why, through Jesus Christ our Lord. As a matter of fact, as part of our consciousness in our efforts towards good, there stands our knowledge of the historical Jesus, whom, literally, having not seen we love. There is no other word to describe the tenderness, the loyalty and the desire with which every one of us must think of Christ.—Rev. J. P. R. Sclater.

Love to God the Motive Power (371).

Why did Father Damien endure the unspeakable suffering of life in the leper settlement of Molokai? Why is Edmund Robbins rejoicing in the triumph of clean government in the very ward which used to be the disgrace of Chicago? It is because the master motive has possessed these lives, and they are able to see through the superficial externals, right into the priceless temple of the heart! When other motives have made their subtle appeals, these men have resisted with unfailing courage. Miss Jane Addams tells, in her early experience at Hull House, of how she began to arouse an interest in legislation to prevent child labor in Illinois. At that time, there were no laws to check and control the greed of the factory owners. In a few weeks a most generous offer was made by these very manufacturers to give $20,000 outright toward her plan for a clubhouse and home for working girls. At first she was thrilled with the joy of seeing her plan fulfilled. But she was given to understand that there was one important condition, that she should not meddle in promoting any legislation about child labor! She was given the hint that she did not understand the labor conditions and that she had better keep her hands off. But as soon as she realized that the large gift was being offered to divert her from the cause of justice she refused the gift with heartfelt indignation. And today Illinois leads all the other States in the matter of legislation protecting the interests of children! The Christ love was surging in Miss Addams' heart, and she instantly rejected the stratagem which was intended to purchase her acquiescence in the evil customs so profitable to the millionaires.—Trowbridge.

Love Fertilizes the Life (372).

Dr. Watson (Ian Maclaren) tells of once hearing a plain sermon in a little country church. It was a layman, a farmer, who preached, but Dr. Watson says he never heard so impressive an ending to any sermon as he heard that day. After a fervent presentation of the gospel

the preacher said with great earnestness: "My friends, why is it that I go on, preaching to you, week by week? It is just this,—because I can't eat my bread alone." That is the Master's own burden—his heart is breaking to have men share with him the blessings of life. He cannot bear to be alone in his joy. There is no surer test of love for Christ than the longing to have others love him.

L. THE GREAT COMMISSION.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."—Mark 16:15.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Robert F. Horton, in preaching on "The Logic of Missions," mphasized the following truth:

All do not immediately see what I call the logic of foreign missions. 3ut surely you will see it from this point of view—the first duty is to proclaim the truth that God has reconciled the world to himself in Jesus Christ, and that he calls men to himself by faith in propitiation, because that truth proclaimed in any part of the world establishes the first seeds, or the first foundations, of the Christian Church. Take, for example, what happened in Japan. You remember that in 1854, when the British fleet was lying in Nagasaki Bay, the Japanese Government was extremely anxious that we should not land, and General Wakasa was appointed to watch the fleet and to prevent the British troops from landing. It happened that as he rowed about the bay in fulfillment of his duty, some careless sailor on one of those English men-of-war had dropped his New Testament overboard. Probably he cared very little for his New Testament, and he parted with it without any regret. But it so happened that General Wakasa picked it up out of the sea, and he was curious to know what this book was. He got an interpreter to tell him what it was. He became interested in it. He procured a Chinese New Testament and read it through—it brought him to Christ. Twelve years later General Wakasa came down to Verbeck, the missionary, and asked to be baptized because he had found the Saviour. Your British sailor let his New Testament fall into the sea, but that New Testament converted the general of the Japanese army, and his family, and the whole circle of his friends, and planted the blessed truth of reconciliation in the islands of Japan. That is the logic of missions. The first duty is to let the world know, and let every race of men know, to have it in every language, to put it within reach of every human being, that "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

* * *

Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott says: Christ sent his disciples forth to preach. The object of the church is to inspire men with the spirit of Christ, and it is not much use to go to church unless you get out of the church something you are going to give out somewhere else. The message of good will, the spirit of service, an attitude of helpfulness—this is the spirit of Christianity as I read it. Love, service, sacrifice, God loving, God serving, God asking of them no sacrifice, but bearing himself in his own heart the burden of their sins and their sorrows. And to be a Christian is to get from the church, from the Bible, from the reservoir, from the heart of God himself this spirit of love, service, sacrifice, and then carry it out in life. Whenever a church has begun to think about itself and forgotten the world outside it has begun to decay; and whenever that decay begins there comes out of it a revolting and protesting

spirit of service. The great movement of the nuns' sisterhood in the Middle Ages was a movement toward service though still tied to the pagan notion of sacrifice; and today in Protestant America men and women are going out from the church, men and women who have got the inspiration from the church without knowing it, and are working in social settlements and other philanthropies in the spirit of him who came, "not to be ministered to, but to minister."

* * *

In dwelling upon "The Great Commission" as Matthew states it, Rev. Dr. Henry N. Cobb said:

These words become his lips who spake them, and his alone. They are the climax to which all that went before led up. They give to the gospel story its deepest meaning. They crown it with its highest glory. They declare Jesus in power and purpose Saviour of mankind. They constitute his imperative, perpetual commission to his disciples.

How comprehensive their content!—"all power," sufficient for all undertakings, oppositions, difficulties, delays and triumphs; "all nations,"—not one to be left undiscipled; the entire race, redeemed by his blood, to be discipled and made one in him; "all the days,"—each day and all day, till time shall end.

How vital their connection—the foundation fact his universal power; on this fact, the precept, "Go!" to this precept joined the promise, "Lo, I am with you!" Power, precept, promise, all so joined that they cannot be dissevered. No power? then no obedience. No obedience? then no presence. No presence? then no power.

Lord, by thy power make thy people willing, and by thy presence give them power to obey thy precept, that so thy glory may soon fill the earth!

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Missionary Indifference (373).

One of the most pathetic letters in the annals of foreign missions was that one written by Adoniram Judson, from Burmah, to the churches which he represented. He had gone forth full of holy zeal; consecrated; heroically ready for sacrifice. He lay in prison seventeen months, in a foul dungeon.

In some way he got the impression that the home church was indifferent. With a heart bursting with grief he wrote them: "I thought you were deeply interested in my work and you were not even thinking about it. I thought you were praying for me and you did not even know whether I was alive or dead."

Responsive Zeal (374).

When Robert Moffat was home on a furlough in Scotland, he was wont to exclaim: "In Africa, I can see the smoke of a thousand villages without a Saviour." In a public address that striking sentence fell upon the ears of David Livingstone, and his attention was at once turned to Africa. Hitherto Livingstone had planned to go to China, but the opium war was in progress and for the time being that country was impossible. These words of Dr. Moffat mark the turning point in the career of Livingstone and at once he came forward asking: "Do you think I will do for Africa?"

Facts and Figures (375).

There are about 25,000 foreign missionaries and about $31,000,000 is given annually for the work. One-third of the workers and one-half of the contributors come from the United States. Rev. Dr. Carroll said, not long since, that there is a healthy increase of missionary activity throughout the earth. It reveals growing liberality of the Christian forces. A greater number of men and women are willing to go out into the field, and the increasing numbers of converts and communicants and of the pupils in the missionary schools prove clearly that the Spirit of the Lord is at work, and the seed sown is bringing forth fruit abundant unto eternal life, but, at the same time, a glance at the table shows that after all only a small part of the work which ought to be done by the Christian Church among the multitudes of non-Christians throughout the earth is being performed, and that prayer should be made without ceasing that the Lord stir up his Church to greater zeal, to greater activity, to greater liberality and to greater consecration in the service of the Master.

Apathy; How Conquered (376).

I may speak to one who is apathetic, who has no missionary interest; or perhaps to one who had a missionary interest and who has lost it and your interest today is only the memory of what it once was in reality. You are living upon the memory of a past interest; you are living upon the fact of an enthusiasm which has spent itself, and in your deepest soul you know, perhaps that you are apathetic.

I spoke on one occasion to a poor woman, and she said that her son was losing his mind. I said, "How do you know?" She said, "Because I notice that lately he has lost all interest in my distress." It is an awful thing to see an adult form with an infant mind. Do I speak to some in this attitude spiritually? Are you not afraid lest the spirit of Christianity is not in you?

"Can my apathy be dispelled?" I hear some one say. Yes, it can be dispelled now. How? Surrender to the Spirit of God at this moment, in small things. When you light a fire, how do you light it? Do you put the match to the logs? No. To the small wood? No. But to the paper, the most combustible, first. Do that in your life. Do not put the match to the big things of tomorrow and next year, but put the match to the small things, the most combustible, the nearest. Let the Spirit of God conquer your physical moods, your sense of weariness and lethargy. Let the Divine Spirit quicken your mortal body. Let him concentrate the action of your mind, for without mental concentration no man can be a strong Christian.

That vast vision of the world will expand his soul. A small vision makes a small man. A vast vision will call out the latent reserves in a life. The presidency of the United States has made men of whom perhaps we were not quite sure when they entered upon the position. The vastness of the responsibility challenged their manhood; and it is this vast enterprise of the Spirit of God that challenges the last atom of your power.—Rev. John Douglass Adam, D.D.

The Strength of the Claim (377).

Because redemption brings blessings for the life that now is—peace,

hope, joy, Christ—those benighted, hopeless, wretched brethren of mine, living under the pall of cruel superstition's midnight, have all the greater claim upon me.

The Banner of the Cross (378).

"I have seen," says Dr. William Barnes Lower, "the sunrise on Mount Blanc, and have watched it kiss the snowy summit of rock-ribbed Ranier; I have watched the crescent moon from the Hill of the Pnyx as it slowly rose and hung its evanescent beams in shadowy draperies around the pillars of the Acropolis; I have stood among the crumbling pilasters of the Temple of Karnak, as the silent stars looked down and sang their heavenly requiem to a race remembered only in its stupendous ruins; I have watched the golden sun as it sank to rest beyond the silvery waters of the Pacific, to rise on republics that were yet to be born in a day. Soul-inspiring, and grandly sublime as all these panoramas have been, the grandest sight that my vision yet has scanned is the sight of the flag of my native land, Old Glory, the flag of my country, as it floated from the tower of Robert College, in Constantinople.

"Silhouetted against the ethereal blue, its sacred emblazonry kissed by every breeze, it heralded to the ships of the Bosphorus and to the nations that go by its message of inspiration to patriotism, its hope to the benighted, its warning to all treasonable alliances, and its prophecy of ultimate freedom to the human race."

That flag on Robert College has been a veritable banner of the cross, floating over one of the most significant foreign mission enterprises ever established by man at the behest of Christ.

One Reward of Obedience (379).

A more unattractive creature would be hard to find than the old Eskimo woman, Omungu. She was an outcast because of sin, was a perfect shrew, and feared because of her vicious tongue. After a prolonged illness she became almost helpless with paralysis. Annooghotungu was another Eskimo, but a Christian. She learned of Christ's forgiveness and how he will "in no wise cast out" those who come to him, and her courage in standing for her faith has been a great joy to the missionaries. She is a young woman, but took to her own little Eskimo igloo (home) this suffering, wicked woman, Omungu, caring for her most tenderly through the long nights and dark days of the hard Arctic winter. It was neither a pleasant nor an easy task, but while ministering to her body, Annoohotungu told her of Jesus and taught her bits of Scripture in the Eskimo dialect, "Because," she said, "I am a Christian, and Jesus wants us to be kind to the poor and friendless."

The mind of the old woman seemed darkened and she could not grasp much at first, but light filtered in, as her last words proved. Just before her death she said to those about her: "Last night when I was lying here, it looked to me as if the top of the house opened and there was a bright light in which One appeared that I think was Jesus. So I said. 'Jesus save me now; Jesus save me now,' and I know he did. When I see him I will tell him how good and kind you have been to me."

LI. THE CHRISTIAN GLADNESS.

"Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."—Luke 2:10.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Henry C. Swentzel, rector of St. Luke's Church of Brooklyn, N. Y., introduced a sermon on this text in these words:

Christmas has charms all its own. It is the great high day in the world as well as in the Church. However things may go, it is a universal fete day, the king of festivals. No burdens of care or grief, no experience of disastrous fortune, no newly made graves, can wholly shut out its sunshine. Although "every heart knoweth its own bitterness," tne birthday of Jesus comes whether men laugh or sob, not to mock, but to comfort and inspire. Only one cloud can obstruct its splendors, and that is the cloud of sin.

Somehow the multitudes delight to turn toward the Bethlehem stable. Explain it as we will, the Christmas Baby is irresistible. He makes the heart sing. His holy feast is not the successor of the pagan Saturnalia, for heathen rioting is intolerable to the immaculateness of Christmas. The Christ-Child himself, makes the day, and, apart from him, its blessed minstrels cease. A last analysis will show that the millions are happy because they say that Jesus was born on Christmas Day. It is because they so explain the day, and thus come in touch with the divine Christ, that one day in every year we have a Christmas world. Contact with the Lord always means happiness, and sooner or later the truth will be more generally recognized that no life can be normal and beautiful and joyous and really strong unless it includes love and reverence for the Christmas Child. A phenomenal amount of religious power is not required in order to make the record and do the marvels of a Christian, for the promise is even to those who have the "faith as a grain of mustard seed."

* * *

Rev. S. Parkes Cadman, D.D., used this peroration: This is good news, is it not? and we can fling it to every wind that blows, until December's chill is made as pleasant as a teeming summer. Its anthems resound across the wintry lands and echo where the flowers bloom. Christ knows no East, no West, no North, no South, no caste and no prescribed ranks. In him we are one fellowship linked to the Brother whose gentle constraint woos the most unwilling. We gain today the meaning of the past, the assured love of our Father and the union of our present life with life eternal. There are good grounds for honest merriment. Cottage and mansion, high and lowly, rich and poor, can jubilate together. We can stop awhile and think of the children of the slum, of our own children, of the friends that love us, of the trials many have to bear. We can bury our dislikes and enmities and greet our foes as friends, and open our heart's door to let the Christ Child in. Greed and mammon can stand aside while we also hasten to Bethlehem and say of this auspicious hour:

"O! blessed day, which gives the eternal lie
To self and sense and all the brute within;
O! come to us amid this war of life:
To hall and hovel, come; to all who toil
In senate, shop or study; and to those
Who, sundered by the wastes of half a world,
Ill-warned and sorely tempted, ever face
Nature's brute powers and men unmanned to brutes—
Come to them, blest and blessing, Christmas Day;
Tell them once more the tale of Bethlehem—
The kneeling shepherds and the Babe Divine,
And keep them men indeed, fair Christmas Day."

* * *

Dr. Lyman Abbott's treatment of this Christmas theme followed this line of development: The scene is fresh in your minds after this Christmas season; shepherds watching their flocks, the angel appearing to them; their terror at this supernatural appearance, and this message: "Good tidings of great joy shall be to all people."

When Jesus Christ came into the world, the religion of the then civilized world, the Roman Empire, was a religion of fear, which was based on the idea that the gods were powerful and dangerous, and that it was necessary to placate the wrath of these gods, or win their favor; and that was the general view of common people all around the globe. There might have been philosophers who held a different view, but that was the common opinion everywhere—worship or sacrifice, or penance, or pilgrimage, or payment, to win the favor of the gods. They were powerful gods; they were liable to be angry gods, and were dangerous gods. The gods are the ideals of the people. Religion was reverence for power inspired by fear. Government was reverence for power inspired by fear. The government of Rome was an absolute despotism. Men obeyed because the Emperor had power to compel obedience. Men feared the law, and that government was carried on for the benefit of the governor just as the government of the gods was for the benefit of the gods. The same spirit animated industry. Industry was a kind of grab game. It is somewhat so now, but it was so altogether, then. Industry was compelled by fear.

Now, at that time, there appeared a man in one province of the Roman Empire who said: "That is a great mistake; it is radically wrong. Religion is not to be feared; the power of your government is not to be feared; the power of your industry is not to be feared. It is something else, very different." Curiously enough, Jesus never said anything particularly about the power of God; he never said anything particularly about the wisdom of God; but if he did it was incidental. What he laid stress on is this: Not that God has power and wisdom but that God is love. The Jews of the age had gathered their conception of God from the phenomena of nature. He said: "You fathers give good gifts to your children; believe that your Father in heaven will give good gifts to you. You forgive your children their trespasses; believe that your Father in heaven will forgive you your trespasses." We have turned the Lord's Prayer wrong end up. At a time when men did not believe

that God forgave at all unless his forgiveness were bought, Christ said: "That is not true: You fathers forgive, and so believe your Father forgives you. Nothing is too little for him; nothing that interests you fails to interest him. Don't think you must purchase his forgiveness. You don't need to offer sacrifice." Christ never suggested that sacrifice must be offered. God is love. Not merely tender love, but love with a wonderful amount of faith and confidence in man—strong love.

* * *

Christmas Gladness.

The Christmas sunshine—the bursting forth of the heavenly Dayspring upon earth's darkness—means all this and vastly more.

This is the deeper significance of the Christmas joy message.

It means the bursting of the tides of heavenly gladness through the crust of earth.

How thoroughly typical of this was the effulgence that illumined the sky near Bethlehem on that glad night of nights. And how sublime is the word picture of it given by Luke. Recall his vivid words.

How the light flowing from that Dayspring has penetrated the dark places of earth and illumined them with joy! How true it is that Christ came "to give light to them that sit in darkness!"

That radiance shines upon lives steeped in guilt and the shadows of hopeless regret are scattered and penitent souls find joy in pardon and hope replaces despair.

That sunlight falls upon the dark places of earthly experience and even the valley of the shadow of death loses its power to arouse fear.

Like a powerful searchlight it shines into the unfathomed future, and life and immortality are brought to light.

Surely Christ's coming means, above all things else, eternal sunshine for sin-darkened souls.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The World's Sweetest Joy (380).

In his human birth Jesus became a part of the world's sweetest and most primitive joy—the joy that awakens when it is said, "A child is born." Only brutalized or perverted natures do not feel that thrill. In the mansion in the great city, or in the lonely cabin out on the rim of the world, this joy is the same. Its springs lie far under all the conventions and accidents of life. Poverty and wealth have nothing to do with it. Bed of straw on manger floor, or queen's couch canopied with silk and gold, it is all the same. The birthsong is the note of the world's generic happiness, that, in human kind, is one with the joy of the bird that flutters and sings above her nestlings, and with that yet more primitive heart-quiver that runs through all lower life with the shooting of a seed and the opening of a flower. And so Jesus entered the stream of human joy not halfway down its course but at its fountain head. Evermore, since Bethlehem, young mothers will think of him when they first feel the soft touch of baby fingers on their breasts, and the strong man will think of him when, with deep joy and pride, he first lifts up a little child and says, "This is my son."—John T. McFarland, D.D.

The World's Need (381).

The people need Christ. They have their share of sin, suffering, sorrow. They deeply need the grace, consolations, and strengthening of the Gospel. The people are capable of Christ. Without the intellectual distinction of the Magi, or the social eminence of Herod, they have the essential greatness of soul which renders them capable of Christ and of his greatest gifts. The people rejoice in Christ. "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen." From that day to this a new glory has shone on all common scenes, a new joy has filled the common heart that has been opened to the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of the world.

The Manger Child.

I know not how that Bethleh'm's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the manger-child
Has brought God's life to me.

—Harry Webb Farrington.

"Christmas Gift" (382).

In the old South we said "Christmas gift" on Christmas morning, instead of "Merry Christmas." And a present was claimed from you if another thus "caught your Christmas gift" before you caught his.

"Christmas giff, daddy," called little Curly Locks.

"Bless your heart, girlie dear. Daddy will give you a Christmas gift, something nice, too." Catching up the tiny pet, he rumpled her all up and made her rosy with the hug and kisses. He expected her to jump at him from behind the door and "catch her Christmas gift," and would have been disappointed if she had not.

"Our Father" listens to hear every one of his children call "Christmas gift" to him. He prepared one for us from before the foundation of the world, and is disappointed if any of us do not claim it. And with the Christmas gift, his own Son, he will "freely give us all things," will throw in all things else that we need. Ask God this Christmas for "his Unspeakable Gift."

"Christmas gift, ole masta," and the face under the red bandana was like a black full moon. "You knows I'se served you faithful all dis year. Ain't I, ole masta?" This was the way of the house servants, who were a privileged class.

Of course she got the gift. Can we come, this gift day, with the same plea to our Master? "I've served you well all this year. A little extra gift to close the year." Can we say it? We are a privileged class to ask this. So gladly will he give to each one, with his salvation, wisdom, patience, gentleness, power, hope, joy, love. He likes to throw in the extras.—Selected.

The Joy of It (383).

A man had a crusty and unsympathetic friend whom he was anxious to win to better feeling. To this man, whose inner nature had never yet been warmed by the glow and presence of Christ, the world seemed cold and matter-of-fact, with little room for the play of sympathy, and scant reason for sacrifice. When Chrismas came, his friend, a man of

larger vision, persuaded him to join with him in trying to make others happy with Christmas cheer. When the day was over, the crusty man was like another being. His heart was melted to tenderness, his soul had been touched with sympathy and with the transforming power of sacrifice. "Why," he said jubilantly, "there must have been a real joy for Christ in dying on the Cross!"—The American Messenger.

What the Tidings Meant for Them (384).

That evening, before sunset, some women were washing clothes on the upper step of the flight that led down into the basin of the Pool of Siloam (under the walls of Jerusalem).

"Peace to you," one of the new-comers said.

"What news have you?"

"Then you have not heard?"

"They say the Christ is born."

"Does anybody believe it?"

"This afternoon three men came across Brook Cedron on the road from Shechem. Each one of them rode a camel spotless white, and larger than any ever before seen in Jerusalem."

The eyes and mouths of the auditors opened wide.

"To prove how great and rich the men were," the narrator continued, "they sat under awnings of silk; the buckles of their saddles were of gold, as was the fringe of their bridles; the bells were of silver, and made real music. Nobody knew them; they looked as if they had come from the ends of the world. Only one of them spoke, and of everybody on the road, even the women and children, he asked this question, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' No one gave them answer—no one understood what they meant; so they passed on, leaving behind them this saying, 'For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.'"

"Where are they now?"

"At the khan. Hundreds have been to look at them already, and hundreds more are going."

"Who are they?"

"Nobody knows. They are said to be Persians—wise men who talk with the stars—prophets, it may be, like Elijah and Jeremiah."

"What do they mean by King of the Jews?"

"The Christ, and that he is just born."

One of the women laughed, and resumed her work, saying, "Well, when I see him I will believe."

Another followed her example: "And I—well, when I see him raise the dead, I will believe."

A third said quietly, "He has been a long time promised. It will be enough for me to see him heal one leper."

And the party sat talking until the night came, and, with the help of the frosty air, drove them home.—Lew Wallace in Ben Hur.

LII LIFE MUST VALIDATE PROFESSION.

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—Luke 6:46.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In preaching on this topic Rev. Dr. Wm. Bayard Craig summed up the teaching in these apt sentences:

Keep my commands, abide in my love—obedience the condition of favor. Nature everywhere teaches and enforces this same law.

All abiding art, all the triumphs of science and industry, bear witness that success is attained only in strict conformity to Nature's commands. Then even the lightning will become a useful, peaceful partner.

God in Christ, the incarnation of the divine love, wisdom, and power, woos the soul of man, offering forgiveness and seeking to secure in us a voluntary, loving obedience to the unchangeable truth of the universe—the commands of God. All blessings follow if we "abide in his love."

There is no possible prosperity for the soul of man save in this obedience of faith. The abiding oneness of the Father and the Son, the glory of that loving communion, stands over against the perfected obedience of the Son of God. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

* * *

Rev. Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, in a sermon on the embodiment of God's will in our life, said:

It was a great day for the universe, and, I say it reverently, for God, when man first learned to say "I can." That is the "A" of the alphabet of omnipotence. That is the birth of liberty. The age-long process had silently said: "You must conform to me! Be a part of my passing panorama and perish!" Then came the issue of consciousness, "I can!" This is what kings are made of, and human history and destiny—of men "who can." Men said it to the forces of nature, to themselves, and to each other, and finally to the silent mysterious power that moved behind the earthly scenes. Then the law laid its disciplinary hand upon youthful liberty and taught it that it had not outgrown law by learning to say "I can," but had only come into a sphere of law all its own. Immediately there followed the second letter in the alphabet of consciousness, "I ought." Here is where liberty attained full life. It is only when men subordinate their consciousness of power to their sense of obligation that they enter into the real heritage of liberty. Finally came the climax of the process when man learned to say "I will." Liberty fulfills its function and law issues in perfection when man learns to say "I will" to the eternal order. Perfect liberty is only possible, then, when man can run the whole gamut of moral possibilities, saying to the God who made him, "I can live in a world of law and become a part of it and yet be conscious of myself as higher than the process." I "can," but I also "ought." "At length, having realized the end of my being in the law of God, I bring all the resources of my consciousness into active

participation in the great plan of God. By every choice and purpose of which I am capable, I will embody the order in my own life."

In all of these affirmations of human liberty man has been meeting on a familiar footing, the will of God. He has been portraying in epitome upon the tablets of his own soul the consciousness of God. The final perfection of the law of liberty comes only when the will of God and the will of man become wedded in the bonds of an eternal covenant.

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ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Jumping at the Chance to Obey (385).

I went to that great Nashville convention, under painful, pitiful circumstances. My college daughter was that week, we feared, near the end of her earthly life. She rallied and did last for a year or more after that. I said on Saturday night, "I do not see how I can go." She knew my engagement to go, and she called me to her and said: "Daddy, I will not slip away while you are gone. But there will be all those students at Nashville. You go down and tell them what they know, that any one of them who gets a chance to tell the story of Jesus Christ anywhere in the world ought to jump at it."—Bishop Thoburn.

The Clew to Zeal is Love (386).

"Cut a little deeper," said the French soldier under the surgeon's knife, "and you will find the image of the Emperor." That was the explanation of the triumph of the French army, and of the military glory which so intoxicated the French people. Where is the key to the mystical courage of Charles George Gordon at Khartoum, or James Chalmers offering himself a sacrifice to the cannibals of New Guinea, if it is not in the vision that never left their thoughts of the Christ whom they loved and whom they served, present with them, speaking to them, waiting for them even in the moment of the last surrender?—Stimson.

General Booth's Answer (387).

When J. Wilbur Chapman asked General Booth the secret of his success the veteran replied: "God has had all there was of me. . . . If there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will and all the influence of my life."

Happiness by Doing (388).

The highest happiness comes not by what we hear or see or feel—it comes by what we do. What shall it profit a man though he hear great music and read great books and have his soul stirred by the appeal of some prophet of the living God, unless as a result of it all he goes out and does something? If you hear and feel and see, happy are ye if ye do, and only then. "The criticism of the next generation upon this," some wise man has said, "will be, 'How plainly' they saw their problems, how ineffective they were in solving them." Jacob Riis shows us "How the Other Half Lives," but thousands of the more fortunate decline the huge task of helping to change the hard lot of their unhappy fellows. Booker Washington in "Up from Slavery" shows us a vision of a backward race ennobled by training, but thousands of white men

forget to lend a hand. John Spargo utters "The Cry of the Children," for there are two millions of them under sixteen years of age working at gainful occupations in our own land according to the government census, but the lack of resolute action to stop this physical, mental and moral depletion of the immature is disgraceful. Lincoln Steffens shows up "The Shame of the Cities" and it brings a blush to the face of many a patriot, but when the task of removing that shame begins to make demands upon the time and strength men are giving to their private business, there are many whose love for civic righteousness waxes cold. What are lessons and visions for but to be speedily translated into deeds.—Congregationalist.

The Overflowing Life (389).

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman in preaching upon "The Second Mile," refers to the old Oriental rule which required one who met a traveler in a strange country, if called upon, to turn aside from his own journey and go with the stranger one mile to show him the way. To this the rule of Jesus has been added, "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Dr. Chapman says: "It is this second-mile Christianity which the world needs today, and second-mile living would compel weary pilgrims to turn their faces Christward. Christ is himself always the inspiration and example of the second mile. The fact that you are a Christian may not of necessity prove that you have power. It is only when your life overflows that power is in your possession. The valley of the Nile is a fruitful valley not because the Nile flows through it, but because the Nile overflows."—Selected.

Obeying Orders (390).

Posted up at the railroad stations and in the post offices are notices by the Government calling for young men to join the army. A young man is left to his own choice whether he will join the army or not, but once enlisted, he is no longer left to his own course. If Uncle Sam says for him to go to China or the Philippines, there he must go, and there is no alternative. If he declines to obey orders he is dismissed from the service, and that, too, under disgrace. It is none the less true when we enlist under the Captain of our salvation, that we are on service and must obey orders. The order is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. William Duncan was once asked if he would go to the Indians of the great Northwest. He replied by saying he would go anywhere in the world where he was sent, and if need be he could be ready in an hour.

All along our coasts are saving stations. Now and then a ship is dashed upon the rocks and many are in the perils of the deep. Just where it may happen no one can tell; but there is a constant lookout from the shore for shipwrecked mariners, and wherever it may happen, there the rescuing party hastens, with all speed to render all possible assistance. Often this is accompanied with great hardships and perils. But no man enlisted in the service thinks for a moment of drawing back because of these things. Can a Christian do less?—J. M. McCaleb.

Unquestioning Obedience (391).

Epaminondas was one of the leading generals of Greece. His success

brought him many opponents. This is an unfailing accompaniment of success. Those opponents elected him scavenger of his city in order to humiliate him. In accepting this position Epaminondas said: "If the work will not reflect glory on me, I will reflect glory on the work." There never was such a scavenger as Epaminondas. He dignified a despised calling. Greece never had another such example, and down to this day his name is mentioned with honor.—Selected.

Failure in Fidelity (392).

If we have failed in fidelity, manward or Godward, what then? Let the story of "the sifting of Peter" tell us. Such a grievous denial of his Master and Friend! Yet Jesus sought him out because he knew that Peter loved him, and because he loved Peter he probed his heart and said to him again, "Follow me." Thus

"Noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer." —Selected.

The Dedication of the Will (393).

When we turn to the word of Jesus Christ, and to its translation in apostolic doctrine, we discover that neither thought nor feeling is laid at the foundation of religion. Christ had no quarrel with the human intellect. He recognized its wonder and its power. His own intellectual life was far too rich for him to be a traitor to the brain. Nor was Christ the enemy of human feeling. He never made light of tenderest emotion. He who wept beside the grave of Lazarus could never be the antagonist of tears. But in the teaching of Christ it is not thought or feeling that is the well-spring of personal religion. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me;" the well-spring is in the region of the will. It is there that a man must pass from death to life. It is there that the path of piety begins—not in the loftiest and holiest thought, nor in the rapture of excited feeling. The first thing is the dedication of the will; the response of a free man to a great God; the yielding of self to that imperious claim which is made by the loving Father in the heavens. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."—Rev. G. H. Morrison, D.D.

Volition Wedded to Faith (394).

When Volition is wedded to Faith, Omnipotence will bless the banns. Here lies the secret of all strength. Apply it to whatever emergency or requirement, and it will never fail. Are you enslaved to some habit which Christ bids you put off? Look to him and make an effort at freedom, and the bonds will be burst. Is a hard task imposed upon you, and do you feel inadequate to it? Trust in him and make the effort, and you will find that what is impossible with man is possible with God.—Bartlett

LIII. TRUTH-SEED

"The seed is the word of God."—Luke 8:11.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. God's Word is a portion of the food he has given to man to live by. It is the spiritual sustenance he has provided to support the spiritual part of us, the soul. For the soul, as well as the body, requires its fitting food. Both must be supported and nourished, if we would have them thrive. Does not all nature cry, from every part of the creation, that everything earthly must be fed? Fire must be fed, water must be fed, even the earth itself, which feeds all things, must be fed, else it will crumble into dust, or harden into a rock. So it is with the soul. That, too, as well as the body, must be fed with food suited to its nature. This is so plain that the heathen themselves knew it. They were fully aware that the soul would never thrive, unless it was nourished with food suitable to it; and to find that food was the great desire of the best and wisest men among them. Now if they did this, they who only knew that their spirits required food, from feeling them crave for it, what will God say to us, if we are less anxious about the nourishment of our souls?

II. The Bible is not a charm, that, keeping it on our shelves or locking it up in a closet, can do us any good. Neither is it a story-book to read for amusement. It is sent to teach us our duty to God and man; to show us from what a height we are fallen by sin, and to what a far more glorious height we may soar, if we will put on the wings of faith and love. This is the use we ought to make of the Bible. If we use the Bible thus, Christ will open our eyes to see the way. He will send you wings and they shall bear you up to heaven. For this must be borne in mind, that God alone giveth the increase. The only way of insuring that our labor shall not be fruitless is by prayer; the only way of drawing down a blessing on our study is to ask for it.—A. W. Hare, D.D.

* * *

Rev. W. P. Patterson, D.D., gives the following summarizing of the influence exerted by God's Word in the world:

I. It gives men the sense of a satisfactory relation to God.

II. It has moulded a high type of character.

III. It has prescribed a new mode of life and given power to live it.

IV. It has called into existence a Christian society which has been the chief nursery of moral enthusiasm and eleemosynary organizations.

V. It has evidenced assimilative power, and has drawn on the world "(as the seed in the soil)" for the support and enrichment of its life.

VI. It has shown extraordinary persuasiveness, permeating every sphere of human activity.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Seed of Spiritual Growth (395).

Dr. Arthur T. Pierson declared that more than thirty years of study

of the Bible had wrought in him the solemn persuasion that the Word of God is the one book which it pays most richly to make the almost exclusive subject and object of searching study.

"I have found," said he, "that my preaching and my living, my intellectual and spiritual life, my approximation toward both true holiness and true happiness, have been supremely influenced by the habit of daily and prayerfully searching the Scriptures. This one habit has proved the all-sufficient 'apologetics' to dissipate doubt, and the all-sufficient 'energetics' to put power into practical service. If called upon in one sentence to prescribe the antidote for all the worst ills to which the soul of man is exposed, I should promptly say that I knew of nothing so adapted to the great panacea as this: to cultivate the daily habit of prayerful communion with God through his inspired word."

Dwight L. Moody and his Bible were inseparable. No man of his century did so much by example and teaching to revive Bible study as did he. He had a large, choice library. But the Bible was his one book. For a number of years he made it a rule not to read any book that did not help him to understand the Bible. He said he was "a greater slave to that book than any man is to strong drink." He believed, as he wrote on the title page of his Bible, "This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book."

Mr. Moody confidently declared that he had hope of the worst man, as long as he would read his Bible, feeling sure that he would turn to God some day. But, he said, "I am full of fear for the best man if he neglects his Bible. He is almost certain to fall before the enemy. Amid these last days' perils there is no safe-guard but in the word of God."

We believe, as a certain writer declares, that "the most strategic thing a pastor can do is to persuade his congregation to read the Bible;" that "a Bible-reading congregation is ready for every good word and work;" and that to enlist an entire community in Bible reading and Bible study "would be better than a revival." Indeed, that would be a revival!—Selected.

The Seed of Social Progress (396).

When the Bible goes down the red flag goes up. Without the Ten Commandments and the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, you leave society at the mercy of a sea full of moral privateers. Statesmanship is never so shortsighted as when it hedges against the Bible, one of whose constantly reiterated doctrines is respect for magistrates and administrative authority. And labor and industry are nothing else than purblind, when they tolerate indictments against that volume whose chief theme and inspiration are the life, the words and the deeds of Jesus the Carpenter.—Dr. Du Bose.

Worth More Than All the Rest (397).

When the missionary, Dr. Duff, first went to India he took with him a library of about 800 books. The ship in which he sailed became a complete wreck, while he was cast upon a small desolate island, all his books being lost. In the morning there appeared one book, which was washed upon the shore, and that was a large copy of the Bible. This one book practically constituted his outfit.

The Bible in Demand (398).

The Bible is still much more in demand than any other book. The Oxford Press turns out 20,000 Bibles in a week. More than 40,000 sheets of gold are used in lettering the volumes; 100,000 skins go into the Oxford Bible covers each year. The British and Foreign Bible Society prints the Bible in four hundred languages. During the first year of America's rule in the Philippines 10,700 Bibles were distributed there. Contrary to expectations since the Boxer insurrection in China, the Bible is in greatly increased demand. The issues of Bibles for China last year were 428,000 copies. The fact is, the Bible today is the most popular book in the world, and more copies are sold than of any other hundred books combined.—Westminster Gazette.

Sowing the Seed (399).

Humanity in all parts of the world seems ready to receive this old book. Missionary versions of the Bible now number 476. The complete Bible is in 106 of these languages; translation into still other dialects is constantly going on. In 1910 the aggregate output of twenty-seven Bible societies was 12,843,196 copies of the Scripture. Since its organization in 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society has issued 220,000,000 Bibles, Testaments and separate Gospels, Psalters and other portions of the Bible. No other book in the world approaches the Bible as a "best seller."

The Vitality of the Seed (400).

The Bible not only has power to awaken conscience; it likewise has power to vitalize. It requires life to communicate life. Emerson said of the words of Montaigne: "They are vascular. Cut them, and they will bleed." How much more truly may we say that of the writings which comprise the Bible. They are vascular, they vibrate with vitality. Cut them, and they will bleed. They are leaping out from life to life wherever they go among the nations. Wherever this river travels, there comes vitality. Take the literature of our day that comes with greatest helpfulness, and that seems to touch the sleeping conscience, it is the literature in which we find embodied the ideals and ideas of the Bible. Take the non-Christian religions, those sections of them which are manifesting renewed enterprise and activity. I make bold to say it is always where the Bible has been given the largest right of way.

So it is throughout Christendom. Those churches which are most formal and lifeless, and which, apparently, lack propagating power, are those which are the most ignorant of these writings. Here is vitality: "Thou hast the words of eternal life." "My words are spirit, and they are life."

The Bible has energizing power as well. Huxley said that the only true education is that which enables a man to do what he knows he ought to do, at the time he ought to do it, regardless of the consequences. I would emphasize that the Bible, as no other writing, communicates power, enabling men to take that difficult step which you and I are called on to take many times each day, the step between knowing our duty and doing it. It is at this point that the other religions so hopelessly break down according to their own confession.

They tantalize their followers. I have talked with thousands of them,

and I am in a position to know. What sinful men up and down this world want is not more teaching as to what they ought to do and be, in higher ideals and in fresh examples, but power which energizes the will to do its duty. For some reason which never fails to move men with awe, God has been pleased in all these years to communicate most largely his impulse and irresistible energy through these vital pages which we scatter at times, I think, so carelessly among the nations.—John R. Mott.

A Drink From the Old Spring (401).

One of the first operations performed in the city of Chicago for appendicitis was performed on a young New Englander who was in Chicago on business. He was taken to one of the largest hospitals. This young fellow came from the State of Vermont, where the springs are abundant, and it is a beautiful thing, when you are thirsty, to get down on your knees and dip your face in the water of the spring. When the operation was over, and this young Vermonter was coming out from the anæsthetic, they saw his lips move, and the nurse, bending over heard him say, "Water." She said, "Doctor, may I give him a drink?" But when she brought it he would not take it, and they heard him whisper again, "I want a drink of water." The doctor bent over him and said, "Is it water you want? There is water right here." By this time the young fellow was beginning to gain consciousness, and as he looked up into the doctor's face with a smile, he said, "It is not this water that I want. I want a drink from the spring at my mother's door, back in Vermont." So in our deepest experiences of need, there is but one real satisfaction, one source of peace and hope, and that is God's Word.—Selected.

The Seed of Liberty (402).

What is producing the ferment in the East? Mr. Gladstone said that Robert College did more to solve the near East question than all the armies and diplomacy of Europe. Put the Bible in countries where tyranny and injustice have long held sway and the inevitable fruitage in God's good time will be liberty, democracy, justice and brotherhood.—Selected.

The Seed of Civic Welfare (403).

The more the Bible is put into the minds and hearts and daily lives of the people, the less concern we may have with respect to our political laws. Take out of our lives the Scriptures, and you would strike an irreparable blow to our national progress, and to those high ideals which we associate with America and Americans.—Charles W. Fairbanks.

Growth in Grace (404).

The study of God's word will secure peace. Take those Christians who are rooted and grounded in the word of God, and you will find they have great peace. It is those who do not study their Bible who are easily offended when some little trouble comes, or some little persecution. Just a little breath of opposition, and their peace is all gone.—D. L. Moody.

Penitence and Peace (405).

The reading of the Bible should always make us sorry if we have

not been living well. Many a person's heart has been broken by the searching words of Holy Scripture. A city missionary left a Bible in a godless home he was visiting. One evening the man of the house picked up the book and began to read it. Soon his face showed distress, and he said to his wife, "If this book is true we are living wrong." Evening after evening he continued to read it, and his anxiety deepened into sore anguish. "If this book is true," he said again, "we are lost." Next evening he read on further, and the Holy Spirit continued to work in his heart. Lines of joy came into his face, and he said to his wife with gladness, "If this book is true, we may be saved." This is the story of the way the reading of the Bible always works when it is not resisted. It convicts, then condemns, then leads to the Saviour.—Selected.

The Power of the Word (406).

A man was sitting on a pile of planks near the Quirinal in Rome. At his feet lay a large package.

A couple of gendarmes, passing, noticed the bundle on the pavement. They stopped and asked what it contained, ever suspicious of infernal machines.

"Dynamite!" said the man.

The gendarmes jumped. One of them gingerly seized the package, the other seized the man, and both were taken to the police headquarters.

When the package was opened, it was found to contain—Bibles.

"Where's the dynamite?" inquired the gendarmes.

"The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," replied the colporteur.

He was right. The bundle contained dynamite. The word of God is dynamite. "Dynamic" is the exact Greek word that the sacred writer uses for "powerful." The Bible is dynamic toward sin and all unrighteousness.—Christian Endeavor World.

The Bible's Influence (407).

The wonderful working of the living God through his word is the mightiest single apologetic with which we are familiar.—John R. Mott.

The spirit and words of the Bible walk abroad in all modern literature to such an extent that readers cannot enjoy in an intelligent fashion our authors of today unless they hear Moses and the Prophets.—Prof. William Lyon Phelps.

How the Seed Grows (408).

About the year 1820 a number of persons were found in a few villages in India who had forsaken idolatry and who constantly refused to render to the Brahmans the customary honors. They were said to be remarkable for their truthfulness and correctness of conduct. It was said that they had derived all their principles from a book which was carefully preserved in one of their villages. Some native Christians resolved to visit the sect of whom they had heard so many remarkable things. The singular book from which their principles were derived was exhibited to the visitors. It was much worn, and was preserved in a case of metal resembling brass. On examination it was found to be a copy of the first edition of the Bengalee New Testament, printed at Serampore in 1800. This copy of a part of the sacred volume reformed twelve villages and opened the way for extensive missionary work.—Jennie M. Bingham

LIV. COVETOUSNESS.

"Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—Luke 12:15.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In a sermon on this text Rev. Frederick F. Shannon unfolded the thought along these lines: I. False wealth, according to Christ, is rooted in covetousness: "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness." Here is one of many of our Lord's examples of penetrative, noon-clear insight. He shows perfect mastery of a given situation while he states an ageless truth. It is probably within the facts to assume that the back-lying cause of this man's appeal to Christ was covetousness. Grant that the justice of his demand was unquestionable, that his brother should have divided the inheritance with him. Yet having both right and justice on one's side fails to curb the deep-seated, elemental passion for gain, the desperate eagerness for possession which kills the fine disposition of the soul. Did Christ detect this as the source of the man's trouble? Did the Master see that back of the justness, the rightness of his cause, the man was himself held in the strong subtle grasp of avarice? It may have been. For covetousness is not a thing of caste; not a matter of class distinction. The man in the pulpit may be just as covetous as the man in Wall Street. He may not have the same opportunity for exhibiting his covetousness, but the principle may be there just the same.

II. Moreover, false wealth is invariably victimized by things. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The rich fool is an example of the man who has become the slave of things. How unmistakably his own words reveal his inner decay! Hear him boast of "my barns," "my grain," "my goods!" He himself is submerged in the muck and the mire of materialism. And things take their terrible vengeance upon him, as they always do. When Midas asked for the golden touch, it was granted. Everything went golden—the milk on the table, the flowers in the garden, even his little daughter stiffened into a statue of gold. Then Midas became wise enough to pray that the golden touch be taken away from him. Does not the myth illustrate in a large way the utter futility of mere things? But it does more; it shows the reactionary, deadening power of things upon character. Men must master possessions or possessions will master men. The glitter of things exerts a more than hypnotic power over the dupes of avarice. "There is nothing on earth," says the Wall Street Journal, "that looks good that is so dangerous for a man or a nation to handle as quick, easy, big money. If you do not resist its deadly influence, the chances are that it will get your son. It takes greater and finer heroism to dare to be poor in America than to charge earthworks in Manchuria." This, also, was at once the warning and the plea of the late William James. Recognizing the dreadful onslaught which a mad desire for comfort and luxury is making upon the modern world, he thought it was time for men to take again the vows of poverty, like Francis of Assisi. Only the grace of God can save many men from the grasp of gold.

III. Contrasted with false wealth, Christ has forever set before man the wealth that is true: So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." How grandly does the Master brush away the shadow and lay bare the substance! The man who goes through the world "himselfing," who cannot see beyond the circle of his own narrow, selfish interests, is foolish and poor; but the man who purposefully invokes the presence and guidance of God in his life, is wise and rich. He definitely sets himself at such a spiritual angle as to be usable. The smiting wonder of the Christian God is that he asks human co-operation. He challenges each soul to make the venture into the realms of abiding reality. Christianity is the interspersing of the finite with the infinite. Our definition, then, of true wealth is this: True wealth is Godlikeness.

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Rev. Dr. William J. Harsha made this comment on the text: Here we have a solemn command evoked by a striking incident and backed up by a pertinent reason. The command itself is cumulative in form. "Take heed and beware." If we carefully consider what covetousness is in its nature and tendencies, we will diligently avoid it. "Take heed." Meditate upon the tenth commandment as well as repeat it; revolve in mind how discontent with our lot dishonors God, how envy of the apparent happiness of others destroys brotherly sympathy, how covetousness kills generosity, stifles good impulses, and stands in the way of that charity which "suffereth long and is kind" because it "envieth not." And having taken heed, "beware!" Set a watch on every thought and motive that tends toward envy. Be strict with yourself and generous with others. Covetousness creeps in unnoticed, and you will be startled to find it appearing in heart and life. Hence the need of being "wary," vigilant.

The incident out of which this command grew is very striking. The dividing of inheritances has been in all the ages a fruitful source of covetousness. Envy is "as rottenness in the bones." How soon envy entered into the world! The first sin was Adam's pride; and the second, perhaps, was Cain's envy.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Root of Evil (409).

How "many kinds of evil" have been rooted in "the love of money" in all countries and in all centuries! By covetousness more than by perverted conscience the persecutions of the Jews have been caused in all ages. Greed in American whalemen, aided by lust, has almost depopulated the Sandwich Islands—Christianity coming too late to do more than delay the result. Greed in the Portuguese traders aided by Romanism, caused the banishment of Christianity for two centuries from Japan. Greed in English merchants carried the opium curse into China. Greed's injustice and trickery have provoked most of our Indian wars. Greed has corrupted our national politics.

"Mr. A. has just died worth ten millions." When he meets God he will have two hard questions to answer: First, How did you get that money? second, What did you do with it?

That man is a failure who has gained wealth by the sacrifice of greater things. It is not success to give two millions for one, nor to exchange character for cash.—Selected.

Riches and Wings (409a).

When some one remarked in his hearing that "riches take wings," it was Mr. Dooley who sagely replied: "Riches niver took wings from anybody that was entitled to wear wings." The oddly construed statement holds a truth that we oftentimes overlook in our estimate of the dangers of wealth.

Prosperity, we say, often makes a man selfish, proud, narrow; he values material possessions above everything else and grows avaricious in his eagerness to win and hold to them. He sacrifices higher things and grows hard of heart and small of soul. But in reality there is nothing in wealth itself to create these traits; it only develops and reveals what the nature holds. The ability to get wealth, to see how and where to turn the resources at hand to financial profit, is as much a God-given talent as is art, oratory or music. It may be debased or misused, as may be the others; but it holds in it intrinsically no more of evil. There are many who fancy themselves full of kindness and generosity, only waiting for means and opportunity to do great things, who fail to carry out their plans when the longed-for opportunity comes; but that is not because wealth changes them. Whoever is sincerely unselfish and a lover of his kind will be doing day by day what he can now with what he has now; and whoever is cultivating that habit in his life will not be suddenly transformed into selfishness by the coming of greater wealth.

Riches may "take to themselves wings and fly away," but neither their coming nor going will ruin the man whose life holds other things higher.—Kind Words.

Conquering Covetousness (410).

How can we ever wield Christian influence enough to change such world-wide deeply-entrenched conditions? Individually you never can. But there is something you can do. You can refuse to throw your manhood, its thought and volition, its honor and integrity, into the fire of worldly enterprise that the golden calf of wealth result. Material wealth is deified nowhere more universally than in America. Immortal souls are degrading themselves to its service. Manhood is being commercialized instead of Christianized. We kneel at the altar of the golden calf rather than at the altar of Christian service.

And our young men and maidens can abstain from flinging their health and beauty into that same fire of worldly enterprise for such shocking results as reaping in terms of sensuousness, intemperance, dissipation, selfish indulgence, foolish extravagance. Were the forbidden pleasures ever running riot with our youth more recklessly than today? And wherever human affections are singed by worldly enterprise and commercialized into unholy marriages, with money and social standing the incentives, there you have that automatic golden calf polluting the marriage altar.

These are some of the tendencies in our peculiar modern civilization that we can guard against. But to do so our Christian faith must be a vital possession. We must experience it for ourselves. It must be deepened and broadened in the wilderness rather than in the tabernacle, out midst the stress and strife of the circumstances that stamp us weaklings or heroes.—Robert MacDonald, D.D.

The One Hundred and Twentieth (411).

In the midst of an age of plenty, even luxury and wealth, God is made a beggar. Though the wealth of Christians in the United States is estimated at $8,000,000,000, in the year 1910 they gave to the spreading of the gospel among those who have never heard of it onlly one-twelfth of a tithe of the savings. In other words, after all necessary expenses had been paid and luxuries provided, out of what they were ready to deposit in the bank they gave one one-hundredth-and-twentieth part. What does God think of us?—Missions.

Thou Fool (412).

"Whoso hath the world's goods and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" Charity was solicited from a rich man as a loan to the Lord. He replied, "The security, no doubt, is good, and the interest liberal; but I cannot give such long credit." Within two weeks he heard the summons, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee."—Selected.

A National Menace (413).

We need to clean the country of the filth of graft and of greed, petty and big; of worship of fine houses, and big lands, and high office, and grand social functions. What is this thing which we are worshipping but a vain repetition of what decayed nations fell down and worshipped just before their light went out?

Great wealth never made a nation substantial or honorable. There is nothing on earth that looks good that is so dangerous for a man or a nation to handle as quick, easy, big money. If you do resist its deadly influence the chances are that it will get your son. It takes greater and finer heroism to dare to be poor in America than to charge an earthworks in Manchuria.—Wall Street Journal.

Glad Giving (414).

A Methodist minister says that in one of his charges a good man regularly gave every Sabbath five dollars for the support of the church. A poor widow was also a member of the same church, who supported herself and six children by washing. She was as regular as the rich man in making her offering of five cents per week, which was all she could spare from her scant earnings. One day the rich man came to the minister and said the poor woman ought not to pay anything, and that he would pay the five cents for her every week. The pastor called to tell her of the offer, which he did in a considerate manner. Tears came to the woman's eyes as she replied: "Do they want to take from me the comfort I experience in giving to the Lord? Think how much I owe to him. My health is good, my children keep well, and I receive so many blessings that I feel I could not live if I did not make my little offering to Jesus each week."

The Philanthropist (415).

I reckon him greater than any man
That ever drew sword in war;
I reckon him nobler than king or khan,
Braver and better by far.

And wisest he in this whole wide land
Of hoarding till bent and gray;
For all you can hold in your cold dead hand
Is what you have given away.

—Joaquin Miller.

Life's Real Values (416).

There are no such things as absolute values. Values depend upon the desires of men. A book has no value to the man who is not interested in the great meanings of life while a yacht or a motor car is necessary to happy existence. A Rubens has no value to a man who enjoys the pictures of the Sunday supplements. So while we talk about the supreme values of spiritual possessions, before they can have meaning there must be a kindling of new desires and appreciations and an enlightenment which can only come through a spiritual awakening, as the meaning of life came to Parsifal only after his enlightenment through pity. The great task of the church is to begin to train its children at earliest age to love the finest things. Above all, we must awaken in men by religious experience their spiritual nature. Then the awakened soul will turn naturally to the things of the spirit—which are the real things of worth. Read the chapters on conversion in Professor James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," and see how the whole scale of values shifted immediately upon conversion.—Lynch.

How Wealth Rots the Fibre of Character (417).

The ill effects of wealth upon character are marked. One evil appears the almost inevitable concomitant of wealth. This is the development of self-indulgence and selfish luxury. Many live simply, however, even penuriously, because of greed; so overpowered are they by the passion of money that they are unwilling to spend much upon themselves. If such people are excepted, the wealthy who live simply and do not surround themselves with luxury are comparatively few in number. Selfish luxury is undoubtedly the prevailing sin of wealth, and from it often spring effeminacy, a pampered appetite, not seldom fast living and sensuality. These are among the results of wealth.

Even those of large means who give very largely to charities or philanthropies rarely do so at the cost of any sacrifice of luxury to themselves. Conscience upon this subject among this class seems almost atrophied, and persons living in extreme luxury will often, with seeming honesty, consider themselves unable to contribute to causes which they acknowledge to be most meritorious and important.

Another ill effect of wealth is the temptation to exalt material possessions over character, and to a less extent over intellectual and spiritual attainments. Wealth procures for its possessor so many opportunities, enjoyments, privileges, often so much power, that the large ma-

jority of the wealthy are tempted to consider the possession of riches the most important thing in life, the ruling consideration in matters of business, of marriage, of social friendship, too often the chief standard in the valuation of men.

Akin to the above is the temptation to gain power—commercial, financial, political, social or otherwise—by methods frequently subversive of the higher dictates of justice and fair dealing, and not seldom contrary even to common honesty, morality, and decent living.—Josiah Strong, D.D.

Greed (418).

One day Lincoln was walking along a street in Springfield with his two boys, who were yelling lustily. Attracted by the cries of the lads, a neighbor came out and asked: "Why, what's the matter with the boys, Mr. Lincoln?" "Just what's the matter with the whole world," replied Lincoln. "I have three walnuts and each boy wants two." How this goes to the root of the social problem in every age!—Selected.

LV. PARDON FOR THE PENITENT.

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."—Luke 15:20.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. George F. Pentecost, D.D., said: We cannot buy God's grace. We must believe what God has told us concerning his grace, accept it, and enter into the joy of it. Paul tells us that "it is of faith that it might be by grace." (Rom. iv. 16).

One day a poor girl ventured into the garden of the Queen's palace at Balmoral, and approached the gardener, telling him that her mother was lying very ill, and that she longed for a flower, such as she had seen in the Queen's gardens.. It was winter-time, and the flowers were rare at that season. The child had saved a few pennies and wished to buy a rose for her sick mother. The gardener had no authority to give away the Queen's flowers, and he said when she offered to pay, "The Queen has no flowers for sale," and would have sent the poor child away. It chanced that the Queen herself was in the greenhouse, and, unobserved either by the gardener or his little customer, had overheard the conversation. As the child was turning away sorrowful and disappointed, the Queen stepped from behind her flowery screen and addressed the child, saying, "The gardener was quite right, my child, he has no authority to give you the flowers you want, nor does the Queen cultivate flowers for sale; but the Queen has flowers to give away;" and suiting the action to the word, she lifted from the basket into which she had been snipping the flowers a handful of rare roses and gave them to the child, saying, "Take these to your mother with my love, and tell her that the Queen sent them. I am the Queen." So let me say to you, God has no forgiveness for sale; you cannot buy it with your poor pence of tears, prayers, or repentance; God has forgiveness to give, and you may take it by faith, but not barter for it with anything you can do.

* * *

Most wonderful of all are the overtures of love. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with garments red from the wine press?" "I am he mighty to—" what? Dig mantraps for the unwary feet of the transgressor? "I am he mighty to—" what? Hurl redhot thunderbolts hurtling along the pathway of the sinner? No. "I am he mighty to—" what? To track the sinner down, and thrust him into the flames of wrath, heated thrice hot? "I am he that is mighty—to save." Between the justice of God and the sinful soul, stands the mercy of God. Between the terrors of memory and the prodigal stands the love of God. There is one way to escape from God's justice and that is to flee to God's mercy. The Divine Father is always abroad by day and by night upon his mission of recovery. In that beautiful story by the Canadian writer you remember that when the young scholar died, and came to the gates of Paradise, he found a group of beautiful mothers waiting at the gate. Just beyond was the summerland, where the sons of God were singing for joy. When the scholar asked these mothers why they did not go through

the gates into Eden, with its sweet delights, one said wistfully, that she was waiting for her boy to come home, that hand in hand with him she might go up the hills of God, and plead the cause of her erring son. But that which a brilliant author dreamed, Christ did and was. For in that hour when each man gives his account unto God, and is not able to lift up so much as his head, but must smite upon his breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," in that hour Christ will plead man's cause before the court of High Heaven.—Hillis.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Modern Prodigal Pardoned (419).

"I am just out of State's prison!"

Dr. Goodell was in the midst of a revival service when a man stood up in the aisle and shouted these words at him in a voice that was harsh with excitement. The preacher paused; the audience sat breathless, every glance turned upon the man in the aisle. His head was bent forward. The muscles of his face were set. His eye rested steadily upon the face of the minister. After a tense moment he went on:

"I am just out of State's prison. I was guilty of all that was charged and of things which were never found out. You have been saying things here which are tremendously true or terribly false. You have been talking about some One who could save people from their sins. You said it made no difference how wicked a man had been if he repented; that his sins would be blotted out. You said he would know he was forgiven and the sense of condemnation and guilt would be gone. Now, if you are saying what you do not know to be true, you ought to be ashamed. If you are holding out to a man like me a hope when there is no hope, you ought to stop it.

"I want to know, sir, whether you believe that this religion you are preaching can save a man like me. You said that Jesus saved a thief on the cross. Do you believe that Jesus can save a thief now?" The man's chin quivered and his eyes swam as again his voice died away. The entire audience was moved. Dr. Goodell confesses that he felt stirred, but he felt also his faith rise at the challenge. He reached across the chancel rail and took the appealing, outstretched hand in his, saying, in a voice for all to hear:

"My brother, I have honestly declared a message in which I believe. I cannot afford to preach a Gospel that is not true, and I will not. I am ready to make this contract with you. If you will meet the conditions which are laid down in the Bible, by which a man may come to God, and you do not find salvation, I will never again go into this pulpit to preach!"

Something like a gasp went over the audience as they realized the significance of the issues thus joined. The two men knelt together at the altar. There was an earnest exposition of the way of life by the pastor with the open Bible before him, with eager, earnest listening by the man. Thereafter the minister prayed fervently, and the seeker himself uttered a few broken sentences, and the congregation was dismissed in suppressed excitement. The service of the following night had been announced, but with the stipulation that Dr. Goodell would not preach

except upon the condition which all now understood. He did not sleep much that night, and the next day was a restless one for him. Some of his parishioners thought he had been too rash and came to tell him so. Night came, and the hour for service. Dr. Goodell was at the church, but did not enter the pulpit. Instead he sat just outside the chancel rail with his eyes upon the door. Would the man come? Would he come a conqueror or a miserable failure, confessing defeat? The time to preach arrived, but the man did not. Another hymn was announced and the congregation sang:

"There is a fountain filled with blood," etc.

As the last note died hasty steps were heard in the vestibule, then the doors swung and a man—the man—with hair disheveled and his features dripping perspiration, rushed down the aisle.

"The car broke down," he exclaimed, breathlessly, "but—" and his voice rose in hoarse notes of triumph—"you can go ahead and preach."—Collier's.

Father and Son Reconciled (420).

There was an Englishman who had an only son, who was very headstrong, and often he and his father quarrelled. Both were very angry; the father said he wished the boy would leave home and never come back. The boy said he would go, and would not come into his father's house again till he sent for him. The father said he would never send for him. Away went the boy. His mother began to write, and plead with the boy to write to his father first, and he would forgive him; but the boy said: "I will never go home till father asks me." Then she pled with the father, but the father said, "No, I will never ask him." At last the mother, broken-hearted, was given up by the physicians to die, and the husband wanted to know if there was nothing he could do for her before she died. The mother said, "Yes, there is one thing you can do. You can send for my boy. That is the only wish on earth you can gratify. If you do not pity him and love him when I am dead and gone, who will?" "Well," said the father, "I will send word to him that you want to see him." "No," she says, "you know he will not come for me. If ever I see him you must send for him." At last the father wrote a despatch in his own name, asking the boy to come home. As soon as he got the invitation from his father he came to see his dying mother. When he opened the door he found his mother dying, and his father by the bedside. The father heard the door open, and went to another part of the room, and refused to speak to him. His mother kissed him, and said, "Now, my son, just speak to your father. You speak first, and it will all be over." But the boy said, "No, mother, I will not speak to him until he speaks to me." She took her husband's hand in one hand and the boy's in the other, and spent her dying moments in trying to bring about a reconciliation. Then just as she was expiring—she could not speak—so she put the hand of the wayward boy into the hand of the father, and passed away! Then the father's heart broke, and he opened his arms, and took that boy to his bosom, and by that body they were reconciled. Sinner, that is only a faint type, a poor illustration, because God is not angry with you.—Moody.

A Japanese Prodigal (421).

A young Japanese hated the Bible, and read it that he might know how to attack it; but as he read he saw himself to be a sinner, and Jesus to be the Saviour he needed. He gave his heart to Christ, returned to his native village, and fearlessly began to speak of his new-found peace and joy. But one of his old school friends became bitterly angry; he and others came to him and said, "Give up this hateful thing, or leave our college." "I will go," he said, "but first let me tell you what it is I now believe." He took his Bible in his hand, and that night he told all the village folk what he had discovered in it of the love of God in Christ. Night after night he went on, till he had gathered enough inquirers to start a Sabbath school. But this former friend got angrier still, and was filled with hatred against Christ. Some time later, this heathen young man was drafted into the Japanese army and sent to Manchuria. By and by the time came for him to return to Japan. Shortly before they went home, he and his companions looted a Chinese house and carried off all the valuables that were there. The heathen soldier brought away a splendid inscribed scroll. When he re-entered his native village, there was a feast held in his honor. Very proudly he held up the trophy, and praised the beautiful motto written on it. His old friend was present, and heard the words read out. "But these are not the words of a Chinese sage," he cried out; "they are taken from the 'Jesus Book' that you despise and hate." The heathen soldier was struck dumb with astonishment. He came to his friend and said: "I surrender, I surrender; that God of yours and that Book of yours find me out wherever I go. Now I will try to know them." He has become an earnest reader of God's Word, and is now seeking to be baptized and to live for Jesus.—Selected.

What True Repentance Is (422).

Repentance is not conviction; you can be convicted without repentance. It is one thing to be called at five o'clock in the morning, and another thing to get up. It is one thing to be awake, and another thing to rise. It is one thing to see your duty and another thing to face it and do it like a man. It is one thing to have light, and another thing to have life. God took the trouble to awaken you, to convince you, and had you submitted, had you paid attention, you would have been a Christian. But you resisted, you fought against it; you said "No;" you rolled over and went to sleep again.

Listen! In Bible language repentance is turning from sin to God. That is repentance—"from," "to." It is putting your hand on your heart and getting hold of the thing that has been your curse and dragging it out, and saying: "There, Lord Jesus, that is it, and I will die before I will commit it again. I will turn from it now and forever." That is repentance.—Gypsy Smith.

LVI CHRIST'S CONQUEST OF DEATH.

"He is not here, but is risen."—Luke 24:6.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

We should emphasize Christ's resurrection, says Rev. E. H. Knight, D.D., in a sermon:

I. Because the resurrection of Christ is the best proof of the truth of Christianity. 1. Proof demanded by Hindu, Chinese, Mohammedan, or doubter in Christian lands. 2. Proof furnished in the resurrection, one of the most distinguishing features of Christianity.

II. Because it is the central fact in the Christian system. 1. Importance of other facts. 2. Resurrection of Christ central. Compare the sun in solar system. 3. What if it were not true? Our preaching vain; your faith vain; no joy, no hope; sin and death. If no sun, no solar system. 4. But it is true.

III. Because it is a token of the supremacy of good over evil. 1. The conflict between good and evil everywhere. 2. Culmination of the conflict in Christ's death. 3. In Christ's resurrection the good triumphed.

IV. Because it is the pledge of the resurrection of the believer in Christ. 1. Would heaven be the best heaven without our bodies? 2. Pledge of our having them in Christ's having his. In each case a glorified body. This the final victory for us over sin and death.

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Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman introduced an Easter sermon with these words: This is Easter Day, when we behold the miracle of life moving forward to something more rich and wonderful in the futurity which awaits its development. Easter Day, when the earth around us is vibrant with renewed vitality. The roots beneath the sod, the bottoms of the streams, the greening mantle of the trees speak of another venture, where death is clothed upon once more. The mysterious stir in the landscape has a hundred meanings for observant minds. Plants and flowers tunnel their way to freedom, and climb out into sunny spaces in search of air and light. The sluggish carcasses which have been tied to the clay revive again, come forth and shine resplendent. For Nature has her graves and they, too, are in her gardens. From them the myriads of her dead arise, each one as a torch along our path to the empty grave in the Garden of Joseph. Upon the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, depends a regeneration of human life to which nothing in ordinary experience can respond. The change wrought in men and women is the standing wonder of Christian energy and faith. At this very place, and in this literature, two worlds divide, the old one and the new. Beyond speculation or opinion, it is a majestic fact that all which is characteristic of modern civilization, of its most elevated social conditions, and of the hopes which sustain and encourage society at this hour arose with Christ at Jerusalem.

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Rev. Dr. Charles Carroll Albertson used the following words as an

Easter sermon peroration: Jesus was a conqueror in the world about him. The people by whom he was surrounded were narrow; he was broad. They were bigoted; he was tolerant. They were prejudiced; he was impartial. Race prejudice, class prejudice, sex prejudice, he ignored. The superficial philosophy of his day he contradicted. The shallow religionism of his day he condemned.

With the world of desire within him conquered, and the world of error around him conquered, what else is there to conquer? There is but one foe left to challenge him. Sin is slain and error is slain, but Death is yet the universal slayer. At last Death levels his lance at Jesus. The great heart bleeds and breaks, and darkness falls, and all the choiring hosts of heaven are dumb, for the Conqueror is conquered, and the Victor is vanquished. But wait! The long road has a turning. The long night ends. The day breaks bright over the hills, and birds are singing in Joseph's garden. The women come with spices. An angel sits beside the tomb. Jesus is not here. The grave clothes are folded. (He was in no haste to leave the tomb.) What means this empty grave? It means the last enemy has been destroyed. It means death has been abolished. It means that your grave and mine, and the graves of our dear dead, shall be empty some time. The light of his life is our guide through the gloom. Death is conquered. All is conquered. The world has nothing more to overcome. And listen! He speaks: "Be of good cheer." What has his victory to do with ours? Everything. He shows us how to conquer. He helps us to conquer. And there is a sense in which, when he conquered death, we conquered, for he was our representative, as well as our pathfinder. Whether we overcome the world and death depends upon our attitude to him.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

What Easter Means (424).

Easter means for you and me a life above the world of sin, a life transformed and made lovely. I went one day to a spot where I used to camp when a boy. I dug up an old root from close to where my head used to be, with my fingers, and took it home to my wife and said: "Annie, look at what I have got." She said: "Look at your fingers, look at the dirt!" And I said: "I want you to come and see where I plant this, and I want you to watch it for me." Some time after, when I returned home from one of our missions, one of the first things my wife said to me was: "You know that dirty old root you planted?" "Yes," I said. "Well," she went on, "there's the most lovely bunch of primroses there you ever saw." The primroses were all in the old, dirty root. And there are roses and primroses and daffodils and lilies-of-the-valley—splendors magnificent—in you and me if we will only let God have his way with us. Easter means that for you and me.—Gypsy Smith.

Immortality (425).

Someone told a man on a great ocean liner of the wonderful piece of mechanism in the engine room, and he started down the companionway one day during his voyage to see it. Halfway down he saw a bundle of squalid rags lying, which on a closer glance proved to be a little sleeping Italian immigrant child who had wandered away from the steerage.

He was a man of refined instincts, and he spurned the bundle of squalor with his boot as he passed. And then he halted, and said to himself, "What am I doing! I am on my way down to see an engine which in a few years from now will be a discarded mass of scrap on some junk pile, and I am spurning an immortal soul which ten million years from now will still be living, for weal or woe!" And he retraced his steps and gathered up the grimy little sleeper in his arms and said, "God forgive me! I will never again fail to realize the infinite value of an immortal soul."

A Glad Hope (426).

I visited a band of pagan Indians in the far north, and found them utterly unresponsive to Gospel truth until I shouted out, "I know where all your children are,—all your dead children." They quickly manifested intense interest. I went on: "They have gone from your wigwams and your campfires. Your hearts are sad and you mourn for the children you hear not. But there is only one way to the beautiful land, where the Son of God has gone, and into which he takes the children, and you must come this way if you would be happy and enter in." As I spoke a stalwart Indian sprang up and rushed towards me. "Missionary, my heart is empty and I mourn much, for none of my children are left among the living; very lonely is my wigwam. I long to see them again and clasp them in my arms. Tell me, what must I do to enter that beautiful land, and see my children?" And others quickly followed him seeking for instruction.—Dr. Egerton Young.

The Dead Are the Living (427).

No one ever stated this blessed truth more clearly than did Dr. Alexander Maclaren in his memorable words: "The dead are the living. Every man that has died is at this instant in full possession of all his faculties, in the intensest exercise of all his capacities, standing somewhere in God's universe, ringed by a sense of God's presence, and feeling in every fibre of his being that life, which comes after death, is not less real, but more real, not less great, but more great, not less full or intense, but more full and intense, than the mingled life, which, lived here on earth, was a center of life surrounded with a crust and circumference of immortality. The dead are living. They lived while they died; and after they die, they live on forever."

The World's Hope (428).

Bishop McDowell speaking of his trip around the world, said: "All the way round I have repeated the Apostles' Creed. It grew richer and richer through the months and the new conditions. In the face of gods uncounted it was good to believe in God the Father Almighty. In the face of Asia's degradation and despair it was good to believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and in the Holy Ghost. At Bombay and Singapore and Foochow we heard of the death of dear friends. Then we repeated again with a new joy, 'I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.' "—Selected.

The Tomb Has Lost Its Terror (429).

The story is told that a chamber in a certain dwelling was reputed

to be haunted, and the family regarded it with terror. But one night the father determined to sleep in it himself, and coming forth the next morning all safe and sound, laughed away the fears of his children. So our Lord entered the grave, and dwelt among the dead; but in the morning he issued forth crying to his affrighted ones, "All hail!" and the gloomy chamber is divested of its terror.—Selected.

After Death, Life (430).

When Christmas Evans, the famous Welsh preacher, was dying, he waved his hand and said, "Good-by; drive on!" Upon Dean Alford's tombstone has been placed a beautiful description of a grave: "The inn of a traveler on his way to Jerusalem." Once in the Alps a hunter on the Mer de Glace fell into a deep crevasse in the ice, and crept along under the immense mass for a long distance, following a stream till he came to a barrier beneath which the water plunged. He had no choice but to fling himself into the swift, cold current and let it carry him whither it would. There was darkness for a minute, and then he found himself borne into the free air and lovely sunshine of the vale of Chamouni. This is a true parable of the Christian death.—Peloubet.

God's Colonization Method (431).

Martineau wisely said, "Death is God's method of colonization." It is a beautiful sentence. The halls of God would be silent and the mansions empty but for the ministrations of death.

I met in Chicago a little while ago a young man who shortly after marriage failed in business and then migrated from England here. "It was hard for the home-folks to let me go, but they are glad enough that I came now. But I have a home for them now," pointing to a neat little house. "Next week I am expecting my wife. I have been decorating it the way she likes. Next year I hope Mother and Father will come. Ah, sir! It was hard to part, but you can't think how glad they are I came!" "In my Father's house there are many mansions." "Death is God's method of colonization." He is not dead; he is gone before.—Rev. N. Carter Daniell.

A Living Christ (432).

Personally I have no more use for a dead Christ than I have for a molten image. The Christ who once did loving deeds and does them no more, who once spoke words of comfort but has been silent for centuries, means nothing to me. It is the Christ whose fellowship I can share, that I want, the Christ who in danger says now as once he said, "Fear not, I am with thee," a Christ of whom we can still say, "There stood by me this night one whose I am, and whom I serve," a Christ who, when we have done our best and all that remains is the consciousness of our own impotence, we realize is near us, that is the Christ I want, and that is the Christ my faith today acclaims. The "seeing him who is invisible" is the awakening of our soul, the energizing of our efforts, the sustaining of our courage, and that shall one day be the thousandfold reward of our poor service, when we see him as he is, and in complete fellowship shall be made in his likeness.—Dr. Wilfred T. Grenfell.

LVII. "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS."

"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John 1:9.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. N. Smyth treated this theme in this way:

I. The Scripture opens to us God's living way of making himself known on earth. The Bible is the record and interpretation of a way of creation and of life which leads from the promise of the beginning on and on, with a purpose never given up, and a goal never lost from sight, until it completes its course in that one sinless life through which God shines—the true Light, the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. God has been present as a living power in man's life, as the educating and redemptive power in Israel, as the grace and truth of life in Jesus Christ who has declared him. Such is God's real self-revelation; his life in men's life, his life in the Christ for our life. The written Gospel is, indeed, worthy of the God-Man. His spirit is in it. Nevertheless, our faith in the real and original revelation, in the Christ of the Gospels, does not depend upon absolute flawlessness in the reflecting glass. That is a question, in fact, for the critics. Let them examine and scrutinize every point in the whole Bible to their hearts' content. We are not anxious to dispute concerning the composition of the mirrors; we are content to receive the light which, by its own radiance, proclaims its celestial source. In this light of life we can walk, rejoicing as children of the day.

II. This Scripture discloses God's way of illuminating our lives. Christ entering into human life is its light. The Christ from God alone is equal to all human needs. He only touches human nature in all its chords; beats all life's music out; lights up all our history. Christianity alone is the truth sufficient for the life of the whole world. Christ renews man at the center and then throughout the whole circumference of his powers and possibilities.

III. Only through lives in real sympathy with God in Christ are we to receive the light of the world. You cannot, by any possibility, know God in Christ simply by argument and much reasoning. Through life to knowledge is the Christian way. Go and follow Jesus in his way of ministry among men, if you would know his father and your Father. As God has come home to man through the life of Christ, so we are to draw near unto God through the Christian life.

* * *

In commenting on this theme Rev. W. Frank Scott said:

I. Jesus is the light of the world, in revealing the evil in men's hearts.

II. In the revelation of the higher spiritual law.

III. In that he points out the way of safety.

IV. In revealing to men the existence and eternity of life beyond the grave.

V. Without Christ the world is in spiritual darkness.

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ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Light on the Soul's Problems (433).

I was speaking concerning the claims of Jesus Christ, when I saw an old, gray-haired man, evidently especially interested. I beckoned him to come near to me at the close of the service, and then I made the statement again, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, because he said he was, and proved his claim by what he did. The old man looked at me for a moment and said, "Yes, but he might have been deceived." I said, "Do you mean to say that Jesus Christ was a fanatic, and not to be accepted as a teacher?" He said, "I should not like to go so far as that." I held out my Bible to him, and said, "Take this Bible and read all the words of Jesus, and if you can find one single sentence in all the sayings of Jesus that represents him in any other way than as the most marvelous of teachers, as any other than the Son of God, then I will agree in the presence of this audience to turn away from my position and take yours."—Chapman.

Christ Self-Revealing (434).

An ancient legend tells of one who lighted a torch and sallied forth to seek the sun. But we need no torch to discover the sun; the sun discovers itself. We best find it by its own light.

"I am the light of the world." We need no extraneous evidence to attest the Divine authority of our Lord. The sincere of heart must recognize in him "the master light," and listening to and obeying his teachings we prove that light of life which is its own witness. We need invent no instrument to know that the sun shines at noon; and thousands of men need no labored treatises to assure them of the authority of their Lord; his words, finding the reason, conscience and heart, bear witness of him.

Many failed to recognize in Jesus a teacher sent from God because of their insincerity and hardness of heart. Many do so still. Let us with honest hearts listen to the great Teacher. He beareth witness of himself, and the Father that sent him beareth witness also.—Selected.

All Dark Without Christ (435).

There is a story told by Henry van Dyke called "The Lost Word," which illustrates the irreparable loss of one who parts with Christ. It is a story of one of the early centuries. Hermas had given himself to Christ. He belonged to a wealthy pagan family. His father disinherited him and drove him out of his home when he accepted Christianity.

In the Grove of Daphne one day Hermas sat down by a gushing spring, and there came to him a priest of Apollo, who began to talk to him. In the end the old man made this bargain with Hermas. He was to assure him of wealth, happiness and success, and Hermas was to give him only a word: he was to part with the name of him whom he had learned to worship. "Let me take that word, and all that belongs

to it, entirely out of your life. I promise you everything," said the old man, "and this is all I ask of you in return. Do you consent?" "Yes, I consent," said Hermas. So he lost the word.

Hermas went back to Antioch to his old home. He found his father dying. The old man received his son eagerly to tell him the secret of the Christian faith he had chosen. "You found something in the Christian faith that made you willing to give up your life for it. Tell me what it is!" Hermas began, "Father, you must believe with all your heart and soul and strength in — —." Where was the word? He had lost it.

Sitting one day with his wife beside him and his baby on his knee, he thought of his old faith, and longed to thank Christ and seek his blessing. Going to an old shrine in the garden, he tried to pray, but could not. He had lost the Name in which alone prayer could be offered. One day his boy was terribly hurt and he wanted to pray for his life, but again, the Name was gone.

Thus in three great hours of need, Hermas, forgetting that he had given up the blessed Name, turned to seek the help that could be got only through that Name, and found nothing but blankness and emptiness.

The World's Only Light (436).

One day a party was crossing the Caspian Sea in a boat. One of the men kept looking up into the sky, and did not take his eyes from a certain star. One of the passengers asked him why he kept looking at the stars, and he said: "Do you see that star? If we lose sight of that one star, we are lost, because that is the only way we know in which direction to steer our boat." So if our eyes are not on Jesus then we are lost. It is more important to see Jesus than anything else in the world.

The Ever Shining Light (437).

Light of the world! forever, ever shining,
There is no change in thee,
True light of life, all joy and health enshrining,
Thou canst not fade or flee.

Thou hast arisen; but thou declinest never;
Today shines as the past,
All that thou wast, thou art and shalt be ever,
Brightness from first to last.

Night visits not thy sky, nor storm, nor sadness.
Day fills up all its blue;
Unfailing beauty and unfaltering gladness,
And love forever new.

Light of the world! undimming and unsetting,
Oh, shine each mist away.
Banish the fear, the falsehood and the fretting,
Be our unchanging day! —Horatius Bonar.

The Truth Shines Out From Christ (438).

As the soul is clothed in flesh, and only thus is able to perform its functions in this earth, where it is sent to live; as the thought must find a word before it can pass from mind to mind; so every great truth seeks some body, some outward form, in which to exhibit its powers. It appears in the world, and men lay hold of it, and represent it to themselves, in histories, in forms of words, in sacramental symbols; and these things, which, in their proper nature are but illustrations, stiffen into essential fact, and become part of the reality.—Froude.

"The Light Which Lighteth" (439).

If we wish to shut the light out of our rooms we must not only close the windows and doors, but we must seal up every keyhole and every chink and crevice, or some urgent ray will pierce its way in. The gracious, long- suffering Lord is not easily driven away. He thrusts himself in upon us wherever there is the smallest opening. If we "have faith as a grain of mustard seed," even through that small opening he will come in and work wonders.—J. H. Jowett, D.D.

Our Need of the Unfailing Light (440).

Sunshine is never continuous. Every year, and nearly every day, brings its gladness and gloom, successes which make us proud, and disappointments which teach us humility. "I saw in my dream," says a poet, "two fountains flowing side by side. One was a fountain of joy and the other of tears. And a voice said in me, 'These two fountains flow together all through human life. God makes them flow together that from one his children may learn gratitude, and from the other trust.' "

"A day not clear, nor dark." Not dark, certainly. There is no darkness for the soul that rests in Almighty love. There are shadows under the shelter of his everlasting wings, but no deep gloom. Not dark, assuredly, whilst your life is crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies, and you have the blessing of friendships, and the kisses of tender affection, and the interest of honest work and broad human sympathies, and grand religious hopes. The day cannot be dark which has all this light and joy and uplifting. And yet there are clouds. For friends pass away; and lips that met in kisses are parted by distrust or death, and sickness and trouble come into happy homes; and children take wrong courses and destroy your hopes. There is always uncertainty. The brightest spells of sunshine are followed by the thickest clouds. We are never elated by a great gain or joy but something comes to sting, to humble, and rebuke. We should think ourselves gods, with no need of prayer, if it were not for this: "Lest we should be exalted above measure, there is always given the thorn in the flesh"—yes, there is always the mixing of up and down, laughter and tears, calm and storm. It is a day not clear, nor dark—Greenhough.

LVIII. THE LAMB OF GOD.

"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In preaching on this text, Dr. L. A. Banks said:

This text is one of those sublime and splendid pictures so full of condensed truth, so rich in the very gold of the Word of God, that one is discouraged in the outset at trying to preach about it. For it is impossible for the most eloquent man who ever lived to add anything to the beauty or strength of this magnificent utterance of John. I can only cause you to look at it from different standpoints, and try like John to hide myself and any thought of my own while you "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Perhaps we may serve this purpose the better if we begin at the last part of the sentence and pursue it steadily to the opening. "The sin of the world." What a significant statement that is, and yet none could be more true. That the world "lieth in wickedness" is the universal testimony of history, which is constantly emphasized by our personal observation. The awful fact of sin, the disaster which it works in human life, the moral disease and degradation which it brings about in the very nature of the soul itself, is at once one of the saddest and most important themes for our consideration. Many try to escape the consideration of it, and shrink from the subject when it is pressed home upon their attention. And yet nothing is so unwise, no folly is so great or so dangerous, as to permit ourselves to be blinded for a moment to the doom that must come upon the sinful heart.

* * *

A speaker in Boston obtained temporary headline notoriety by declaring that too much had been made of the cross in connection with the presentation of Christianity to the world architecturally and otherwise.

We believe that the speaker's contention was not so iconoclastic as the daily papers indicated. Apparently he was enamored of the idea of the star, which is another reputable and historic Christian symbol, and would substitute that for the cross on the walls of our churches and their steeples.

I. What a colossal task indeed it would be to push the cross into the background. To begin, one would have to reconstruct the New Testament. Then he would have to revise thoroughly the hymns and creeds of the Church. Then he would have to turn his attention to the masterpieces of artists and sculptors, to the outward form and ornamentation of our temples of worship. Finally, he would be confronted with the cross as the dominant factor in the Christian experience of the saints from Peter and John and Paul to Dwight L. Moody and William Booth.

II. The cross is in Christianity to stay because Jesus' life was poured out upon it, because his hanging thereon generates a strange and wonderful influence upon the hearts of all kinds of men the world over

and through all the Christian centuries because it assures sinners of God's love and forgiveness.

III. The cross is a new thing since Jesus endured and glorified it. Before then it was a gibbet upon which common criminals were executed. Since then it has been a precious and inspiring emblem of the Christian faith. By all means let us have the star, too, for ours is a religion of hope and aspiration. But before hope can mount very high it must have some justification for its existence. Since the cross of Jesus was set up in the midst of human sorrow and sin and shame, Christians have not been without some clew to the mystery of pain. They have had an incentive to the patient bearing of their own crosses and as they have emblazoned it on their banners and inscribed it on their hearts, they have gone forth, and are still going forth, conquering and to conquer.—Congregationalist.

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ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

"For the Sin of the World" (441).

There is a supposedly humorous but really tragic story afloat of a little girl who, being sent to pray God to be forgiven for a naughty trick, returned to assure her mother that God had answered: "Oh, that's nothing, child; don't mention it."

And it is just about this same sort of answer which the modern world, forgetful of Calvary, imagines it hears God saying concerning its sins. The notion of forgiveness that runs current today is that an indulgent Father, too kind to punish, good-naturedly consents to forget the errors of his children. On such an idea of God's forgiving placidly and carelessly, there naturally follows the easy-going impression that one sin more or less makes no difference; God doesn't keep strict accounts. From that the door is open to almost any kind of moral relaxation.

But the Bible encourages no namby-pamby trifling like this. The Bible demonstrates, with earthquaking seriousness, that whenever a man sins, the lawless act throws awry everything that God is working for in his universe; and in order to bring the dislocation straight, God must strain all the sinews of omnipotence in an agonizing struggle to preserve righteousness.

A world in which those who sin stand as favorably with a complacent God as those who live right, would be a world in which it would be impossible to uphold any law of righteousness at all. In such conditions every moral standard would crash.

So the only way God can release sinners from punishment without abolishing righteousness is to bear the punishment himself. And that is the appalling yet appealing fact that he exhibited on Calvary. That is what the cross of his Son means. Easy pardon, easy sin. But such as know that "his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree"—such as have heard their forgiven transgressions echoed in the agonized cries of suffering Deity—will increase from day to day in passionate desire to sin no more.—The Continent.

The Lamb Slain (442).

In the eighteen years of solitary travel in Africa Livingstone was worn out. Reduced by fever, starved, disabled, bereaved, a man

of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he not only opened up Central Africa by his discoveries, but touched the imagination and heart of the world by his sufferings. It was his death that completed and crowned this breaking of his body for Africa. Borne in a litter to Chitambo's country, and laid in the hut at Ilala, he finished his course. On his knees he was found, dead, arresting forever the attention of the Church, and challenging Christians to evangelize Africa. To make the breaking of his body perfect and manifest for all time, the heart was buried there in the center of the continent, and the body was brought by Susi and Chamah to the coast, and thence to the central shrine of the Anglo-Saxon world. Out of the broken body has sprung the evangelization of the Congo and of the Uganda; Livingstonia and the mission stations on Nyassa testify to it. It will work its miracles until all Africa is won to Christ.—Robert F. Horton.

Our Sin and Our Saviour (443).

Dr. Dale in one of his books tells of a visitor from the Far East who once spent a day with him at his home in Birmingham. They found so much of common interest and kindred experience that they talked far into the night. Finally, as the time drew near when they must retire, Dr. Dale said to his guest: "Before we part I want you to tell me how you came to accept Christianity. That I should have become a Christian was entirely natural. I was brought up in a Christian home and in the midst of a great Christian civilization. But that a cultivated man brought up in an altogether different faith should have become an ardent and devoted follower of Christ is quite another matter. Tell me how it came about." And then the visitor told about his spiritual yearnings and how his ancestral faith failed to satisfy them, how at length there fell into his hands a copy of the four Gospels, how he read them through without stopping, read them with burning heart and growing conviction, and how at length, when he had reached the heart of the Gospel of John, he said: "It must be true—it is true—for it is just what I have been longing for and searching for." And with conviction came surrender and in that surrender the freedom and peace which Jesus Christ alone can give.

This cultivated Oriental felt the same sense of sin which we ourselves have felt, realized his need of a Saviour just as we realize ours, and found that need supplied in Jesus Christ precisely as we do.—Selected.

Christ For Us (444).

Miss Mary Ford, a missionary in Syria, said: In a certain village in Syria there is a large family of Jews, who were living in discord—brothers and sisters and their families at variance, some of them not speaking to or having anything to do with others. There was no peace or happiness among them. At length they decided that this state of things must come to an end, but no one would acknowledge himself in the wrong, or sacrifice his own interest for the sake of peace. They finally agreed to settle it in the following way by making one of them fidda, or "substitute," or "redeemer," and they selected the wife of the youngest son. She was forced to return to her husband whom she had

left because of unkind treatment, and he was at liberty to vent upon her all his anger, not only against her, but against all the others. The rest of the family refrained from cursing and abusing each other, but relieved their feelings by heaping them all on her, as she was the fidda. Husbands and wives became reconciled, brothers and sisters controlled their bitter words after having spent them upon the poor substitute, who said to the missionary, "My life has become a burden more heavy than I can bear. I wish I were dead." And this was among the Jews, to whom was first given the knowledge of the world's Redeemer, or Fidda.—Sunday School Times.

The Cross of Christ (445).

When the Portuguese colonists, following the trail of Vasco da Gama, first settled Macao, on the coast of South China, one of the earlier buildings they erected was a massive cathedral on a hill crest, with a splendid approach of stone steps. But a violent China Sea typhoon proved too severe a test for even the massive building, and three centuries ago the cathedral fell, all save the front wall. It has never been rebuilt, and that ponderous facade has stood as a sort of mournful monument ever since. On the top of this facade stands a great bronze cross, clean cut against the sky, defying rain and lightning and typhoon. It is a striking thing to see; and when Sir John Bowring—then Governor of Hongkong—visited Macao in 1825, he was impressed by that cross surmounting the ruined church.

The sight inspired the famous hymn, "In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time." Since that day, thousands of visitors have looked upon the ruin, and the cross that glorifies the ruin; some with indifference, some with curiosity, some with reverence. The hymn sung by the world-circling Church of God for nearly ninety years, was born in the mind of the British Governor of Hongkong, by the sight of the same cross that stands today "towering o'er the wrecks of time." As you sing this hymn, think of a great ruined wall on a misty hill-top; birds nesting on its hideous gargoyles, the sea and the mountains and the sky of China seen through its gaping doors and windows; and over all the Cross, changing desolation to majesty.

Sir John has gone but his hymn remains; the builders of that distant cathedral are long since forgotten, but the cross they reared there in memory of the Crucified One remains. And time has seen mightier wrecks than a cathedral. The monarchy that built it has gone; the priesthood that burned incense within it has been driven from the colony forever; and the iron dynasty that ruled those Chinese hills beyond the bay has crumbled as did the church of stone. But the cross, it stands. And the light of that sacred story is bringing liberty and light and life to Portuguese and Chinese; and in these days of ours we begin to catch the vision of that radiant day when all men shall know the story of the Cross and from the heart shall worship the Christ of the Cross and of the Throne.—Rev. Francis E. Wilber.

LIX. SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION.

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."—John 3:3.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. B. B. Tyler summarized this truth in these words:

It is the peculiar excellence and glory of our religion that it is spiritual; that the soul of man is quickened, enlightened, sanctified, and consoled by the indwelling presence of the spirit of the eternal God. To his disciples, in view of the great work to which he had called them—the evangelization of the world—Jesus said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The gift of the Holy Spirit was not peculiar to the chosen ambassadors of the Christ. The same gift is expressly promised "to them that obey him." The saints in Ephesus trusted in Jesus after they heard the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, and after they believed they were sealed with the Holy Spirit which had been promised. Saint Paul exhorts his brethren to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit;" and assures them that he prays to our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant them according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. This blessing is needed by Christians now; and it may be possessed and enjoyed by faith, love, obedience, and prayer. Be assured that "our Father which art in heaven" will freely "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

* * *

Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett impressed the fact of our dependence upon regeneration for all spiritual power as follows:

Ye shall receive that power when the Holy Ghost has come upon you; power to see sin, power to loathe it, power to expel it and cast out the devil. Does it do it?

* * *

In Professor Coover's book on Christian experience a young fellow the son of a clergyman, at Oxford University, makes this confession: "Before the period of leaving Oxford, and my conversion, I never darkened the door of my father's church, although I lived with him. For eight years I made what money I could at journalism and spent it on high carousals with anybody who would sit with me and drink. I was converted through Drummond's book, 'The Natural Law in the Spiritual World.' Then I made on my knees my first prayer before God for twenty years, and then the Holy Spirit came. And from that hour drink has had no terrors for me. I never touch it and I never want it." Another is this: One morning there came into a Birmingham Bible School an old man who said that for over fifty years he had been a slave to drink, and was on the verge of suicide when one of the men brought him to the school. He came regularly but didn't give up the drink, and one of the brothers asked him, "Why don't you throw the drink to the dogs?" "I can't," he said. He had reached the stage when he cried, "O, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of

this death?" Then his friend quietly told him that Jesus came on purpose to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, and presently the old man knelt down and prayed, "O, God, take the drink curse away from me." He said to my friend afterward, "Since then I have not known what it is to want a drink." Even the drink curse is overcome by the power of the Holy Ghost. Dr. Dale of Birmingham was very uncertain what to say when Sankey and Moody first came to that town. For a while he held aloof, but at the end of the mission, a year afterward, he came as a witness, and I remember one sentence of his testimony. He said, "I have seen the sun rise on the Rigi, and it was a glorious sight, but the glory of the sunrise on the Rigi is a shadow compared with the sunrise I saw in saloons in Birmingham when the power of the Holy Ghost came and destroyed the sovereignty and night of sin and brought in the morning." You can have that power in China or in New York. "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Regenerated Soul (447).

It is Christ himself, immediately realized, who makes the heroism of Christianity.

In Atlanta, Ga., a few months ago all the evil resorts were peremptorily closed by the chief of police. When the order went forth, a Christian citizen called together the ministers of the city and put at their disposal unlimited money, and we went down into the vice district as good brothers of our poor sisters and offered them Christian homes, Christian schools and a way of escape from the life of sin. I went into one of the houses—a veritable palace of vice—and the woman who kept the place met me defiantly and was very bitter. Three days later that woman came to the headquarters of the Men and Religion Movement and gave herself over to us for the service of God. She laid down on the table before our eyes $2,500, which represented all her earthly wealth, and she told this story:

"I left Atlanta and went to Birmingham, and I was mad with everybody; but in the hotel there on Sunday, something told me I must leave my old life and that I must go and be a friend of the poor girls who have gone astray. I wept all day, and during the night something spoke to me and told me to come back to Atlanta, and to take everything I had and give it for a home for the girls." When we attempted to reason with her and to impress upon her that this money was everything she had, she would simply reply: "Jesus told me to do it and I know he will take care of me if I do everything he tells me."

Today in that city stands the Martha Home for Wayward Girls. The same Master who took Peter's boat and nets and caught the multitude of fishes, 1,900 years ago, took that woman's life and her money and built that home. She had no power, and yet she is a power.—Rev. John G. White, D.D.

Regeneration (449).

Regeneration must not be stereotyped, standardized by hard-and-fast rules of human invention. We must remember, with Professor Bowne, that "God makes persons alike in the religious life as little as

he makes them alike in mind or body or circumstances." The infinite variety exhibited in the physical world is seen in the world of souls. Stars differ in glory, and so do humans. Diversity is very dear unto God. Personal identity in the midst of boundless variety is one of the surpassing glories of human life. Christ's coming into the soul may be as various as the blades of grass, as the drops of dew, as the grains of sand, as the worlds that golden the midnight sky, no two of which are exactly alike. Christ may come in on the mystic barge of dreams, whispering, "I am the Captain of thy soul. Henceforth we sail the deeps of eternity together." He may come in an agony of despair. He may come in volcanoes of pain. He may come in the darkness of terrible anguish. He may come through a mist of fertile tears. He may come like a glad surprise, lifting us to heights immortal. He may come as lyric trumpets of joy, blowing their spiritual reveille and summoning the soul to fight the good fight with soldierly courage. But however and whenever he comes, we know that lesser joys wane; that old powers of evil release their grip upon the soul; that spiritual night fades before the soft illumination of his inner dawn.—Rev. Frederick F. Shannon.

The Difference It Makes (450).

A maiden from her birth had some singular defect of vision. It was only by degrees that her family realized the extent of her trouble, and she was almost grown before an oculist saw her and pronounced an operation on the eye necessary.

For weeks after this critical time the patient was kept within doors and carefully guarded, but one balmy night she stepped out alone upon the lawn, and almost immediately returned to the family circle in a glow of excitement.

"Oh! come," she cried, "come and see what has happened to the sky."

They hastened out with her and saw nothing but the familiar glory of the stars; she had never seen the stars before!

Transformation (451).

When Halley's comet was far in the depths of space, it was cold, dark, slow moving. Even there, however, the sun's power was at work upon it, drawing it toward itself. As it comes near that luminary, it feels the heat, electricity, and other forces proceeding therefrom. These awaken inward pulsations which result in the development of the coma about the nucleus and the stretching out of the tail across the heavens. When the process is complete, that which long was invisible, then hardly seen as a faint nebulous patch, has been "fashioned anew, the body of its humiliation conformed to the body of his glory" who has unfailingly worked for it, upon it, and in it. Even at its worst, all these splendid possibilities were within it.

Changed Clean Through (452).

During a visit to St. Mark's in Venice, Dr. Chapman noticed the alabaster pillars beside the great altar. They were dull and lifeless—strange they should be there. The guide took a lighted taper and held it before one of the pillars. Then its beauty appeared, color radiated

from it and filled a great circle with light. All that happened was that light had fallen on its dullness and it had answered with light. No less thing than that is planned by Jesus Christ for his followers. No less thing, a vastly greater thing! The change he works is not upon them, but within them. He would make the King's daughters and sons all glorious within. He would not shine on us as the taper ray falls on alabaster; he would be a blaze of glory in our lives that shall transform them throughout. Some one tells of a countryman going into the capitol at Albany and hearing it said that certain columns were Scotch granite. He tapped them thoughtfully. "Scotch granite," he said, "is it polished that way clean through?" A Christian ought to be changed clean through; in the secret life, in the open life, in the whole life.—Selected.

A Quickened Mind (453).

In the biography of Hugh Price Hughes, his daughter writes: "My father's conversion was the prelude of a great awakening of mental power." And she goes on to say the opening of the powers of the spirit was the opening of the doors to his mind and those powers began to wake when the soul became alive unto God. Hugh Price Hughes was not only mentally quickened to life by the Holy Ghost, but the slug of sloth was never allowed to intervene. In the biography of John Wesley, who was possessed in every move of his life by the Holy Spirit, you will never find the slug of sloth. He was always on the move, always alert, always at his best. Augustine Birrell in his life of Wesley says: "I have fought many a contested election in England for a Parliamentary seat, but John Wesley contested the United Kingdom for God throughout a long life."

Transformed (454).

It was a piece of marble which somebody had hacked and marred and cast aside as worthless. It had lain for years in a rubbish-heap, soiled and half buried in dirt. But there came a great day when the man saw it who was a great artist. A real artist is one who can see what nobody else can see—in a flower, a stretch of beach or a piece of stone. And this man saw something in the rejected block, and with the artist-key, which they call a chisel, he set to work to bring it out of prison.

For many days he labored; now making the marble chips fly as he hammered with fierce eagerness, now working slowly, with delicate touch, and often stepping backward to see the figure afresh. And one day the prisoner came forth, radiant in white. It was the noble figure of a young man, eager to serve the God whose voice he had heard. It was David! standing with his sling in hand, ready to meet Goliath.

That was more than 300 years ago. The statue stands today in a great gallery in Italy.—Rev. Frank T. Bagley.

LX. GOD'S TRANSCENDENT LOVE TRANSCENDENTLY DEMONSTRATED.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) commented on this text in these words:

It is for every person to settle with himself what he will do with this great sacrifice which has been offered by Jesus according to the will of God, upon the Cross of Calvary, and with the innumerable benefits which the sacrifice has won. We have the same liberty of choice with regard to the sacrifice of Christ that we have with regard to the sacrifice of patriots. Should it be our pleasure, we can avail ourselves of the liberty and of the right which men of old have won for our commonwealth and carry ourselves as free-born citizens, and accept the responsibility of our high citizenship. Or we can carry ourselves as bondsmen, refusing any share in the government of the country and rendering no service. We can also accept with grateful heart the spiritual blessings which are bestowed by the Cross, claiming the forgiveness of sins, and taking our place as the sons of God. Or we can prefer guilt to righteousness, and remain of our own will in the bondage of sin. Two things are certain, that no one can achieve his own salvation, and that our salvation has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, and still another thing is quite as certain, that by an act of consent any one can place himself within the merit of Jesus' sacrifice and so make himself an heir to its fullness of life.

Of the last clause of this text Dr. G. H. Morrison said:

Put in another way that just means this, that Christ is thinking of quality not quantity. Life is eternal in virtue of its quality, rather than in virtue of duration. You can never measure life by its duration. The two are not commensurate at all. We take the equal hours that the clock gives, and we mould them in the matrix of the heart. And one shall seem to us to be unending, it is so weighted with a leaden sorrow; and another shall have but flashed upon us when it has passed away, and that forever. There have been hours for you when you have lived more than in the passage of a hundred days. There have been moments when you have seen more deeply than in the gropings of all a heavy winter. Life mocks at time. Life tramples in disdain upon the calendar. Life's truest measurement is never quantity, it is quality. Christ was thinking of a life so full and deep that the very thought of time has passed away. When a river is dry and shallow in the summer-time, you see the rocks that rise within its bed. And they obstruct the stream, and make it chafe, and fret it as it journeys to the ocean. But when the rains have come, and the river is in flood, it covers up the rocks in its great volume, and in the silence of a mighty tide, flows to its last home within the sea. It

is not longer than it was before. It is only deeper than it was before. Measure it by miles, it is unchanged. Measure it by volume and how different! So with the life that is the gift of Jesus. It is that same river deepened gloriously, till death itself is hidden in the deeps. Knowledge is perfected in open vision; love is crowned in an unbroken fellowship; service at last shall be a thing of beauty, fired by the vision of the God we serve. That is eternal life, and that alone. That is its difference from immortality. That is the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ to the immortal spirit of mankind.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

He Died on Calvary (455).

I was in an eye-infirmary in Chicago once. A mother brought a beautiful little babe to the doctor—a babe only a few months old—and wanted the doctor to look at the child's eyes. He did so, and pronounced it blind—blind for life—it will never see again. The moment he said that, the mother seized it, pressed it to her bosom, and gave a terrible scream. It pierced my heart, and I could not but weep; the doctor wept; we could not help it. "Oh, my darling," she cried, "are you never to see the mother that gave you birth? Oh, doctor, I cannot stand it. My child, my child!" It was a sight to move any heart. But what is the loss of eyesight to the loss of a soul? I had a thousand times rather have these eyes taken out of my head and go to the grave blind, than lose my soul. I have a son, and no one but God knows how I love him; but I would see those eyes dug out of his head tonight rather than see him grow to manhood and go down to the grave without Christ and without hope. The loss of a soul! Christ knew what it meant. That is what brought him from the bosom of the Father; that is what brought him from the throne; that is what brought him to Calvary. The Son of God was in earnest. When he died on Calvary it was to save a lost world; it was to save your soul and mine.—Moody.

The Central Truth (456).

A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done, he went to the old minister and said:

"What do you think of my sermon?"

"A very poor sermon," said he; "there was no Christ in it."

"Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always; we must preach what is in the text."

So the old man said: "Don't you know, young man, that from every town and every village, and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?"

"Yes," said the young man.

"Ah," said the old divine, "and from every text in Scripture there is a road to the metropolis of the Scripture—that is Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road to the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have not yet found a text that hasn't a road to Christ in it. If I should, I would make one. I would go over hedge and ditch, but I would get at my Master, for the

sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it."—Words and Weapons.

How Christ Saves (457).

A man who had been converted from a sinful life gave this experience of his acceptance with Jesus: "I just crept to the feet of Jesus, and greatly to my astonishment, he did not scold me—he knew I had been scolded enough; and he didn't pity me; and he didn't give me any advice either. He knew I had had plenty of that. He just put his arms around my neck and loved me. And when the sun arose I was a new man."—Harbough.

The Power of the Cross to Save (458).

My first impression of the natives of the New Hebrides drove me to the verge of utter dismay. On beholding these natives in their paint and nakedness and misery my heart was as full of horror as of pity. One day two hostile tribes met near our station; high words arose, and old feuds were revived. The discharge of muskets in the adjoining bush, and the horrid yells of the savages, soon informed us that they were engaged in deadly fights. Some of the women ran with their children to places of safety. We were afterward informed that five or six men had been shot dead; that their bodies had been cooked and eaten that very night.

Next evening, as we sat talking about the people and the dark scenes around us, the quiet of the night was broken by a wild, wailing cry from the villages around, long-continued and unearthly. We were informed that one of the wounded men, carried home from battle, had just died; and that they had strangled the widow to death, that her spirit might accompany him to the other world, and be his servant there, as she had been here. Now their dead bodies were laid side by side, ready to be buried in the sea. Our hearts sank, to think of all this happening within ear-shot. Every new scene, every fresh incident, set more clearly before us the benighted conditions and shocking cruelties of these heathen people, and we longed to be able to speak to them of Jesus and the love of God. We eagerly tried to pick up every word of their language, that we might in their own tongue, unfold to them the knowledge of the true God and the salvation from all these sins through Jesus Christ.—In 1892 the whole population of Aniwa had become more reverently Christian than any other community I had visited.—Paton.

"Stand Where the Fire Has Been" (460).

An experience never to be forgotten is that of those who have encountered prairie fires on the Western plains. In the distance they have seen the clouds of smoke, and have smelled the burning grass. If the winds be blowing from the direction of the fire, their position is one of extreme danger. The swiftest horse can scarcely outrun the flames. On they sweep with the fury of the hurricane, consuming everything in their path. In such circumstances the only safety is to set fire to the grass at one's feet and stand where the fire has been. The surging waves of flame must cease at the border of the newly-burnt zone.

In a very graphic way this illustrates the work of Christ. He interposes himself between the sinner and the waves of destruction that were

bearing down upon him. In his own body he bore the penalty of sin. Sin, so to speak, burnt over him; and in the gospel he is calling men to come to him for safety.

It was on the cross of Calvary that the fire burned fiercest. It was the hour of the prince of darkness. The fury of Satan exhausted itself on the "Sinless Sufferer" there. And "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Standing where the flames have been, the sinner need not fear the fires of sin. They have no power over him. He has a life that is hid with Christ in God. No power on earth or in hell can pluck him out of the Father's hands. What an assurance of safety! How gladly ought men to avail themselves of it!—Selected.

The Battle of the Ages (461).

The battle of the ages has come, and the center of it is in the Cross of Christ. It is no longer, "What think ye of Christ? Is he the Son of God or not?" but "What think ye of the blood?" To depreciate the blood, to repudiate the blood, to discount the blood, to count it just common blood, just like any reformer's blood spilled by a rabble—this is the battle of the powers of darkness against the truth today. Christian Science and kindred errors dress up the ethical teachings of Christ in beautiful clothes, and present them to us as Bible salvation. But there is no atoning blood in all their tenets, and therefore no Christ. When you get a desperate case of need—want to save one low down in degradation and sin, only the blood of Christ can make any impression of miracle-working.—St. Louis Christian Advocate.

LXI. OTHER REFUGE HAVE I NONE.

"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—John 6:68.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In presenting Christ's transcendent claims upon men Dr. Samuel Charles Black said: The essential elements in ideal manhood, as viewed in the light of the new age, are four: Integrity, personal purity, the spirit of brotherhood, a grip on things divine. In what class of great men do we find them? Where shall we look to see these virtues worked out in daily living? Shall we find them among the great rulers? We must pass by Alexander, with his greed and gluttony, and Herod the Great, with his murderous heart, and Constantine and Charlemagne, who, though favorable to Christianity, were ruthless of human life. We must pass by the kings called Louis in France and the Henrys of England. We must pass by Napoleon, the wizard of the battlefield, who lacked them all.

May the great statesmen be looked to for these virtues? Hardly unto Rousseau or Richelieu or Machiavelli. Certainly not to Lord Bacon or Mazarin. Cavour and Gladstone and Washington and Lincoln had many virtues, but no man would dare to take them as patterns for the full round of life. Among great literary men neither Shakespeare nor Goethe may be followed. The former abdicated the throne his intellectual genius reared for him, preferring to live on the lower planes of life, and the latter, one admirer says, "Kept two friends busy, one plaiting crowns for his brow, the other cleaning the mud from his lower garments." Lord Byron and Robert Burns had the genius of Olympian gods, but lived so close to the earth as to early snuff out their gleaming candles. Andrea del Sarto had the brush of a Raphael. He has given to the world its greatest "head of Christ," but del Sarto sold his brush for gold and fell on disgrace and death ere half his course was run.

Passing by the men whom the world considered great, manhood finds its ideal in one who was as simple as a child, pure as a virgin, helpful as one's best friend, self-effacing as a mother, fearless as a soldier, whose faith in God and heaven even Gethsemane and Calvary could not shake—Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, the Saviour of the World. All other men sink down and disappear when he approaches. He alone may be followed with safety. Never yet has he led one follower astray, but everyone, walking in his footsteps, has triumphed in life and passed through the gates into the city.

Jesus alone is the perfectly balanced man. There is no leaning to right or left for personal gain, no sagging in the middle. The world may mock and scourge and abuse, may rob and strip and crucify; he is the same calm, self-possessed Master. "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

Men and women of today, do you really want the best? The best faith, the best life, the best achievement? Then pass by all other leaders and follow Jesus, the Wonderful. And having made some progress yourself, pray for and contribute toward and work for the day when "we all, in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, shall come

unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Life With Christ Left Out (462).

Paint a starless sky; hang your picture with night; drape the mountains with long, far-reaching vistas of darkness; hang the curtains deep along every shore and landscape, darken all the past; let the future be draped in deeper and yet deeper night; fill the awful gloom with hungry, sad-faced men and sorrow-driven women and children: It is the heathen world—the people seen in vision by the prophet—who sit in the region of the shadow of death, to whom no light has come; sitting there still, through the long, long night, waiting and watching for the morning.—Bishop Foster.

Rejecting Christ Loses All (463).

To reject him is to reject all that is holy and happy in the universe. It is to reject all our hope and promise and true prosperity. As we continue to repel him the dreadful deed becomes a habit. After a while we cease to hear his gentle knocking at the door of our hearts. He never ceases to knock, but we may cease to be able to open the door. When that time comes to a man, he has committed the unpardonable sin. Therefore the solemn warning of this lesson to all that study it is this: Hear Christ, while he calls today. Hear him, receive him gladly into your lives, and take him for your Saviour, your Master, your Guide forever!

The Transcendent Christ (464).

"I have once in my life experienced the influence of personal ascendancy in that high degree which some great personalities have exercised, and the occasion of which I speak was the more striking owing to the absence of concurrent pomp. It was on Garibaldi's arrival in London, where he was hailed as a hero. I was standing in Trafalgar Square when he reached it, driving up Parliament Street. His vehicle was a shabby open carriage, stuffed with Italians, regardless of style in dress; Garibaldi alone was standing. I had not been in a greatly excited or exalted mood, but the simplicity, goodness, and nobility impressed on every lineament of Garibaldi's face and person quite overcame me. I realized then, what I never did before or after, something of the impression that Jesus seems to have exercised on multitudes on more than one occasion. I am grateful to that experience for revealing to me the hero-worshipping potentialities of my nature." There came to this calm and critical scientific inquirer as he stood silent, observant, absorbed, the impression of the simplicity and goodness and nobility of a single-minded great-hearted man. It revealed to him the potentialities of his nature. When men see Christ, they see not only his simplicity and goodness and nobility, but they see his infinite purity and infinite pity, and infinite passion of love, and they rise up to the knowledge of his eternal sonship to God.—Clough

Christ's Claims (465).

Out on the Pacific Coast an old gentleman wrote me a letter, in which he said, "For fifty years I have been an infidel. A sentence I read in the report of the meetings which appeared in the newspapers set me

thinking. I made up my mind that I would spend ten minutes of each day honestly studying the New Testament. I only got through the third day, when I had accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour." Then he concluded by saying, "I believe that any thoughtful man who will consider carefully the claims of Jesus as recorded and substantiated in the New Testament, may come to know him before a week has passed."—Chapman.

Afraid She Might Miss the Only Saviour (466).

A friend was telling me some of her experiences. Miss Henderson was seated on the veranda of the Dufferin Hospital in India one afternoon reading, when a high class Hindu woman came up the steps and asked for an interview with Miss Henderson. My friend rose to speak to her, and as she did so a copy of Holman Hunt's picture of Christ standing outside the closed door fell out of her book to the ground. The woman picked it up and looked at it.

"Tell me about this," she said, her errand forgotten, as a woman long ago forgot her "water pots." "What does it mean?"

Miss Henderson told her, and the woman went away.

Summer passed into winter, and there was snow on the mountains, and the air was chill, and Miss Henderson went to call upon this woman.

As she came near the house she saw the door standing wide open. She entered and—the physical need of the woman foremost in her mind, for she was a trained nurse—at once said: "You should not have your front door open so. The mountains are covered with snow, and it is cold."

"I know it. I have seen the snow, and I have felt the cold, but I thought that perhaps your Jesus might pass by, and I wanted him to find the door wide open."—Winant.

The Only Full-Orbed Man (467).

Where other men are fragmentary, Jesus was full-orbed.

The natural oak is the perfect Charter Oak, the scrub oak is unnatural—and abnormal. The natural intellect is Paul's or Plato's, the one talent man is abnormal and unnatural. The natural imagination is that supreme gift at its best in Dante or Shakespeare, the peasant with his tortoise-like thought is abnormal and unnatural. On the banks of Hudson's Bay and Greenland you will find the pine, the elm and the maple, but dwarfed to tiny shrubs by the Arctic chill. But they are abnormal trees. On this bank and shoal of time, chilled by sin, men's intellect, memory, conscience, hope and love, are dwarfed and shriveled. Here every sweet flower of the heart is repressed, but in Jesus the soul bloomed. He spake as never man spake. What wisdom in his Sermon on the Mount! What insight in his parables! What outlook upon the worlds beyond this, and the rooms beyond this room of the Father's house! What keenness in his thinking! What unity and movement in his argument! In terms of genius Jesus had the finest intellect that earth has ever known. But what Jesus was as thinker, teacher, seer, poet, philosopher, friend, patriot, Deliverer, that all men shall be when God and Christ, and the resources of eternity have wrought their full ministry. In you, manhood is in seed and root. Carry it up to perfection, and you have a life like Jesus' life. And, oh, what hope this brings to the pilgrim host defeated in their plans, dying with unaccomplished

aims, beaten back from this goal, denied this wreath of honor, with the cup of joy dashed from the lips at the moment it was lifted. What is incomplete here is to be completed there beyond! Dying in the forest or the wilderness, the youth beholding the face of Jesus sees as in a mirror the outline of his own face. In the belief that, beholding, he himself should be changed from glory to glory, he puts his dying hand in the hand of the Great Captain, to go joyfully into the shadow and disappear from earthly sight.—Hillis.

Clinging to Christ (468).

U. Bor. Sing, heir of the rajah of Cherry, India, was converted by the Welsh missionaries. He was warned that in joining the Christians he would forfeit his right to the throne of Cherry after the then ruling Prince. After the death of Rham Sing, the chiefs of the tribes met and unanimously decided that Bor. Sing was entitled to succeed him, but that his Christian profession stood in the way. Messenger after messenger was sent, urging him to recant, and they would all acknowledge him as king. His answer was: "Put aside my Christian profession? I can put aside my head-dress or my cloak, but as for the covenant I have made with my God, I cannot for any consideration put that aside." Since then he has been impoverished but is a Christian still.—The Wesleyan.

To Whom Shall We Go (469).

Shall we go to the Pharisees? They make great pretensions to righteousness, but are not sincere, and they never make men better. Shall we go to the scribes? With all their learning they were not able to recognize the Light of the World when they saw him. Shall we go to the rulers of the people? They have no power to rule their own spirits. Shall we go to the world? The fashion thereof shall pass away. Shall we go to the philosophers? They are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. To whom shall we go in our ignorance, in our repentance, in our weakness, in our afflictions, in our sin? To whom shall we go with our burdens? Abraham Lincoln said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."—Selected.

LXII. THE GOSPEL OF ANOTHER CHANCE.

"Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."—John 8:11.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

On "Christ the Forgiver," Rev. Dr. John T. McFarland said: Christus Absolvator—Christ the Forgiver of Sins—no wonder the scribes were amazed and staggered when he assumed that character and prerogative. They were right when they asked, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus did not deny the implication. He knew perfectly well that it was blasphemy for a mere man to assume to forgive sins. No stronger declaration of his divinity, therefore, could have been made by him than when he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." In saying that he meant it to be understood that he was divine. So let us view him—the great Absolver. If he were not that, everything else that he is or might be would be of little worth. His teachings, which set up such high standards, would aggravate human wretchedness, if he did not provide for the pardon of sin.

* * *

In discussing the experience of forgiveness Prof. W. H. Griffith Thomas wrote: This unspeakable blessing of forgiveness comes home to the soul on the authority of the word of Jesus Christ, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven," Matt. 9:2. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven," Luke 7:47. This divine word is the foundation of assurance to the soul. Forgiveness is not dependent on human thought or emotion, or rapture, but on the sure, unerring word of God.

And when thus assured, it is experienced as a great reality. The simple trust which is expressed in repentance and confidence brings into the soul the joy, the rest, the wonder, of divine forgiveness; and the experience is one of the absolutely real things in life. This reality amazes us as we attempt to ponder the marvelous love and grace of God in seeking and finding the lost. Even John Wesley in his theology could not help expressing the wonder that "I, even I, am a child of God, that all my sins are blotted out." Many of the finest hymns of the Christian Church express this spirit of wonder. As Charles Wesley says, "Where shall my wondering soul begin?"

And this real experience provides rest and power: rest as the soul reviews the past, power as it contemplates the future. There is no dynamic to compare with forgiveness. It sets the soul free from past guilt to face present weaknesses and future problems. It provides the soul with divine guarantees of holiness that inevitably bring forth fruit in the life; and day by day, as the forgiven soul contemplates its own standing and its permanent provision in Christ, it can look up to God and say, "Forgiven until now." The heart is "at leisure from itself" to soothe and sympathize with others, to face temptation, to meet problems, and to consecrate itself to the service of God.

If this experience is not a reality, it must be because, as Professor Clow so suggestively says, "Either God is not real, or his wrath against sin is not real, or his love is not real." But those to whom God is not a

name, but a reality, will never hesitate to receive and exult in divine forgiveness.

God only asks us to test this for ourselves: to trust his word, to take his gift, to test his love, and then to tell of his grace.

* * *

In preaching on this subject, Rev. Dr. William M. Taylor used the following treatment:

I. The narrative encourages sinners of every name and degree to go at once to Christ. He will in nowise cast them out. There are no more touching stories in the Gospels than those which tell how Jesus dealt with the most degraded class of sinners. Recall his conversation with the woman of Samaria, at the well of Sychar. Bring up before you once again that scene at the well of Sychar. Bring up before you, once again that scene in the Temple, where the scribes and Pharisees dragged in before him the woman who had been taken in the very act of sin. Then read anew these narratives, and say if the prophecy regarding him was not true, "A bruised reed shall he not break; the smoking flax shall he not quench." Where man perceived no promise of success, and would have been tempted to give up the individual as hopeless, he would labor on until the reed which had given forth a note jangled and out of tune was restored to its original condition, and gave its own quota to the harmony of Jehovah's praise.

II. If we would be successful in raising the fallen and reclaiming the abandoned, we must be willing to touch them and be touched by them. in other words, we must come into warm, loving, personal contact with them. What an uplift Christ gave to the soul of this poor woman, when he, the pure and holy, let her thus approach him. When the Lord wished to save the human race, he touched it by taking on him our nature, without our nature's pollution. So we must take the nature of the degraded, without its impurity, if we would help him.

III. If we wish to love God much, we must think much of what we owe to him. Low views of sin lead to a light estimate of the blessing of pardon, and a light estimate of the blessing of pardon will lead to but a little love of God.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Christ's Loving Forgiveness (470).

More than mere forgiveness does he show to the penitent. It is loving forgiveness. Mr. Beecher used to talk about what he called "hedgehog forgiveness" the sort that bristles all over with sharp quills to stick into the offender. A little fellow who had displeased his sister came to her and asked her pardon, but he was not quite satisfied with her forgiveness when he got it. "Really and truly, do you forgive me?" he asked anxiously, looking very earnestly into her still grave face. "Yes, yes," she answered a little sharply; "didn't I tell you that I forgave you! Why do you think I do not mean what I say?" "Cause," he answered, sobbing, "'cause you ain't smiling!" Unsmiling forgiveness is far from Christlike. Jesus said, "Son—Child." One cannot help feeling how kind his face and how tender his tone was.

The King's Pardon (471).

A man was once being tried for a crime, the punishment of which

was death. The witnesses came in one by one and testified to his guilt; but there he stood, quite calm and unmoved. The judge and the jury were quite surprised at his indifference; they could not understand how he could take such a serious matter so calmly. When the jury retired, it did not take them many minutes to decide on a verdict "Guilty;" and when the judge was passing the sentence of death upon the criminal, he told him how surprised he was that he could be so unmoved in the prospect of death. When the judge had finished, the man put his hand in his bosom, pulled out a document, and walked out of the dock a free man. Ah, that was how he could be so calm; it was a free pardon from his king, which he had in his pocket all the time. The king had instructed him to allow the trial to proceed, and to produce the pardon only when he was condemned. No wonder then, that he was indifferent as to the result of the trial. Now that is just what will make us joyful in the great day of judgment; we have got a pardon from the Great King, and it is sealed with the blood of his Son.

"Sins Dragging Me Down" (472).

She was just a slender wisp of a girl, about fourteen years old, with a quaint English accent in her speech. The special meetings had brought her to take a stand for Jesus, and with other young people she presented herself to the church for membership.

Several of the prominent members of the church expressed their fears that "the little English girl" ought not to be received into the church, since she had been coming to our Sunday School only a few weeks, and she didn't come of a very good family, and she was so young that perhaps she didn't realize the step she was taking. Her earnestness, however, brought her with the others to a conference with the pastor and the deacons, in which, in a careful yet sympathetic way, the real heart experience of these new disciples was drawn out. It came the English girl's turn to tell what brought her to want to be received by the church for baptism. It was hardly to be expected that she would give as clear and satisfactory a statement of faith as those who had come from the homes of our own good church people. But the very first response that she gave seemed to gather the whole matter and crystallize it into a clear and complete view of "the great transaction," Said she, "I felt that my sins were dragging me down and that I needed to flee to Jesus for help." So simple and yet so sufficient was this that when she repeated this same declaration of faith before the church there was a unanimous agreement she should be received for baptism. And we felt anew the truth of Jesus' word that, "Except ye become converted and become as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." —Selected.

The Greatness of Pardon (473).

A man who had been a professor of mathematics in a German University, became a wreck through strong drink. He came to one of Dr. Chapman's meetings, forlorn and dejected, and took a seat in the rear of the room. He was converted and became a member of the church. It was Dr. Chapman's custom to meet the men of his church every Sunday morning, for a short conference on the Christian life. "One morning I

told them that our sins were taken from us as far as the east is from the west," he says in relating the story, "and then, seeing this old professor before me, I said, 'Professor, that is a mathematical proposition for you. How far is the distance from east to west?' He reached for his pencil and note-book, when suddenly he stopped and burst into tears; and facing the crowd of men, he said, 'Men, you cannot measure it, for if you put your stake here and east be ahead of you and west behind you, you can go around the world and come back to your stake and east will still be ahead of you and west will still be behind you. The distance is immeasurable. And, thank God, that is where my sins have gone!'"—J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D.

The Simplicity of Pardon (474).

Going home one day from church, I encountered an old gentleman who looked very unhappy. I said: "My dear friend, you seem not to be happy."

"Oh, no," he replied, "indeed I am not."

"Why," I continued, "are you not sure of your salvation?"

"No," he answered, "I am not; and yet I have made it a subject of prayer for twenty years."

"Prayed for it twenty years," I said, "and yet not saved? Then I will tell you a story. Some time ago I saw a gentleman who being lame, used to be wheeled about in a little carriage. At the corner of a street he saw a beggar who was lame and also blind, and who asked alms of him. The gentleman offered him a dollar, saying as he held it out to him, 'Here my friend, is a dollar for you.' Now the poor man was not only lame and blind, but partially deaf also; and thus, while the gift was held out to him he continued to beg for pennies, until the gentleman caused his carriage to be wheeled close to him, and he shouted into his ear, 'Here is a dollar for you,' and then he accepted the gift with great joy. Is it not the same with you," I said, "dear friend? God has given his own Son. He offers you forgiveness of sins, but you keep praying for that very thing."

"What," answered he, "can I be saved in so simple a way?"

"Certainly," I replied. "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life."

Is there not many a burdened soul which has gone sorrowing and doubting for many years, and whose only need is to grasp the meaning of Christ's precious words, "Only believe?"—Words and Weapons.

The Peace That Accompanies Forgiveness (475).

"Oh, now I see it," he exclaimed, and he went on his way rejoicing.

The purely material things of life are not the great essentials of happiness; they are capable of adding wonderfully to the joys of life, but they cannot assure a single happy hour unless there is peace in the heart. Where wrong has been done, forgiveness is the first condition of happiness—not because punishment is feared, but because God has written a law in our natures which makes it simply impossible that there be peace without forgiveness, unless conscience be absolutely dead. We feel it in our dealings with our friends. We feel it still more in the sweet and

precious fellowship of the home. A wrong is done, and every kindly act, every loving word from the one we have wronged, seems like a coal of fire. The loved one is the same, but we are changed. Then we seek forgiveness, and when it is freely granted, joy returns. We can face the world again; there is nothing more to hide. We are reconciled, that is the central thought, and we go on with fresh courage for the future. Yet we see that all is not just as it was before. Our act can never be recalled, and all its consequences cannot be effaced. Forgiveness does not mean that a miracle is wrought. And we need to learn the lesson, and, as a writer has put it in a popular novel of the day, "repent before the deed is done!" Repentance and forgiveness may bring back friendship and trust, but they cannot change the past, or always, or at once, win back the confidence of the world. They cannot undo all the evil that has been done. The wasted fortune, the shattered health, the ruined reputation, the wrong to others, all stand unchanged. These consequences must be borne. Not even God's forgiveness alters that. What is done is to put the one forgiven in the way of gradual winning back what is lost, and making good, as far as possible, the injury of the wrong. But the guilt is remitted, and the peace of true forgiveness fills the heart.—Lutheran Observer.

LXIII. THE UNTROUBLED HEART OF TRUST.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."—John 14:1.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In emphasizing the Christian's possibility of trust in the midst of troubles, Dr. Grey said: The child-heart throbbing in the breast of the believer cries, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." We are sure of all that we need, of all that infinite Wisdom sees that it is best for us to have, because infinite Love is on the throne of the universe.

I. The trouble with many Christians is that, having settled the great fact of consciousness that they do love God, and having accepted the logical conclusions from this fact, viz: that God loves them, and that loving them he must make all things work together for their good, they want to go on and know all about the "all things." They ask, If God really loves me why does he afflict me, or why does he refuse to give me what I ask for? They forget that the child cannot understand all that the father does—that what seems cruel to the child may be prompted by the truest and most self-sacrificing affection. God sends us two answers that ought to satisfy us. First he tells us that he doth not willingly afflict, but that these light afflictions shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and second, he says, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The mysteries that now we strain in vain to comprehend will all be clear and luminous when we stand in the light of God.

II. Then let us be satisfied with what we can know and do know. If we are sure of the love of God, we are sure that all things shall work together for our good.

Fear thou not, for I am with thee; look not around thee, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.—Isa. 41:10, mar.

* * *

Rev. J. H. Jowett said: Now if we are to trust the Lord, our conception of him must be such as will breed a fruitful faith. I took up Luther on Galatians the other day, and as I turned the pages I came upon this heading to one of the chapters: "A rule to be observed, that men ought to abstain from the curious searching of God's majesty." I read this section of the great exposition with eager interest, and I found this further counsel: "Thou must withdraw thy mind wholly from all cogitation and searching of the majesty of God and look only on this man Jesus Christ."

This in fact is all we need to know—our God as revealed in our Lord; the light tempered to the eye, the thunder to the ear, the glory softened into grace. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Well then, let me gaze upon the life of Jesus. Let me follow him reverently

as he speaks and moves along his way. Let me walk with him from Bethlehem to Calvary. Let me accompany him by lake and over mountain. Let me be with him at the marriage and at the funeral. Let me see him among little children and in the presence of the leper. Let me have fellowship with him in Bethany, in Gethsemane and at the cross.

And when I go into the later scenes where darkness gathers, let me have Paul as my interpreter of all that is happening, and when the journey is completed let the great apostle make known to me that this same Jesus is now enthroned in glory. And let me ask myself, Can I trust him? Can I risk my life upon him? Can I commit my all to him? Can I say, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want?" Can I lay my crown at his feet and intrust my soul to him for time and eternity?

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The True Sight (476).

There is much sorrow which would instantly be turned to joy if those who weep could see things as they really are. The loss of a friend is grieved over, but if we could follow the friend into the glory of heaven we should rejoice. The things we think are calamities and causes for sorrow, if we could see them as God sees them, would appear to be blessings. If Mary had found the body of Jesus in the tomb as she expected to do, it would have been cause for grief. The empty tomb at which she grieved was the reason for the world's hope. Mary did not recognize Jesus. How needless her sorrow was, for, if she had known him, joy would have filled her heart! Is it otherwise with us in our times of fear? Jesus is beside us, even speaking to us, but we do not know it is he, nor do we hear his words of comfort. We grieve and let ourselves be crushed by our sorrows, not knowing that the sorrow is only the shadow of a great joy, and that what seems to us emptiness and loss is really the blessedness of heaven.—Evening Thoughts.

The Faith of a Little Child (477).

A little, golden-haired, blue-eyed boy was beloved by his father, who ever watched over him with the tenderest care, and knew that his beloved son must undergo some months of suffering and discomfort in order that when he grew up his body should become strong, and that he should be capable of entering into and enjoying the pleasures life might have in store for him.

The father had placed him under the care of a doctor who had kept him lying on his back with his little legs in splints. The treatment gave him much pain at times, and the little sufferer, while lying on his couch, would puzzle his head as to why his father should leave him thus in the house of a stranger, and allow him to undergo all this pain and discomfort.

Then thoughts would arise in his mind which induced him to question whether his father did really care for him, and if he did, what reason could he have for allowing him to be made to lie on his back all day with his legs in those horrid splints?

These thoughts, however, he was quick to banish, for as he looked back he remembered all the loving care which had been bestowed upon him by his father, and the many and various acts of kindness he had

received from him; and thus he brought himself to feel sure that his father must have some good reason in sending him away from home, and in permitting him to undergo this treatment.

And he determined to be patient, and cease questioning, and wait quietly until his father should come and take him back to his home again.

Surely then we of larger growth should learn to have the faith of this little child, and feel convinced that when our Heavenly Father sees fit for us to have pain and suffering it is for some wise and beneficent purpose, and sent for our ultimate good.

Could we but bring ourselves to view things in this spirit, it would help us to better understand the mystery of pain. As the earthly father knew what was essential for his child's welfare when he grew up, so should we feel certain that our Heavenly Father knows what is best for his creatures, and instead of losing heart and murmuring at our fate, we should strive to acquire the simple faith of a little child.—Great Thoughts.

Trusting in Trouble (478).

Since 1883 I have been consciously trying to sail on the ocean of life so as to keep ever heading towards that haven, which something within assures me exists beyond the bound of time and space. God knows it has not been all calm seas and sunny skies on the voyage, there have been head-winds and fogs and ice. Yes, there have been also shoals and reefs and storms. All have had their share in forming the devious wake the years have left behind me. Think what the chart of life has meant, still means, must ever mean to me. It seems to me it must mean just the same to any man faring forth on the same venture. Its inconceivable value will only fade when I have crossed the last bar and met my Pilot face to face.—Wilfred T. Grenfell.

Courage and Calmness Through Confidence (479).

People, as well as gardens, get too crowded. One thing chokes out another in our lives, and too often it is the best that gets choked out. We are living so fast, we have so much to do, so many interests! As some one, feeling the disadvantage of this hurry, said: "I am in danger of being jostled out of my spirituality." It is a real danger, and one that threatens us all in our rushing life, in these days. Cares, worries, distractions, seem to grow in our hearts as naturally as weeds in a garden. Some people think worries quite harmless, but Christ spoke very strongly against them as most potent for evil in our lives, in the way of crowding out the good. He warned us strongly against all anxiety. He said plainly that it can add nothing to our stature, possessions or success, but, instead, does us harm and grieves our heavenly Father, who all the while is caring for us.

There are two things, at least, about which we should never worry. First, the things we can't help. If we can't help them, worrying is certainly most foolish and useless. Secondly, the things we can help. If we can help them, let us set about it, and not weaken our powers by worry. Weed your garden. Pluck up the smallest roots of worry. Yes, watch for their first appearance above the ground, and pluck them while they are small. Do not let them get a start, or they will crowd out all the beautiful things that ought to grow in your hearts.

Unshaken (480).

I am determined, God helping me, that no man shall rob me of my faith. I won't hide it away. I'll keep it right around with me, if I can. I will see it gets exercise. I will feed it all I can, so that it shall not starve. I won't force it if I can avoid it, and make it weedy and weakling. It shall say no things it does not believe. When in real danger, if I can, I will go to some one stronger than I to help to keep it safe. But when that necessity arises to whom shall I look for help? Surely directly to him who I believe gave it to me. For I know whom I have trusted, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep it against that day.—Dr. W. T. Grenfell.

Trust and Be Glad (482).

Be patient, keep sweet. Do not fret or worry. Do your best and leave results with God. Believe firmly in God, in the fulfillment of his purposes and in the march of his providences. God's laws are immutable, and work with undeviating regularity. Walk in fellowship with God, and every year you will be a stronger, better, happier, and sweeter man. Do not mar your peace or power by needless worry. Live by faith in the Son of God, who loves you and gave himself for you. On some bright tomorrow you will come to anchor under a haven of sapphire and a harbor of calm, with chimes ringing their welcome from the spires that sentinel the city of God, while from the battlements millions will shout, "Well done!" while God himself will say, "Enter thou into the joy of the Lord."—George B. Vosburgh.

The Christian Way to Live (483).

Many people have a strangely perverted faculty of exaggerating their mole hills of trouble into mountains, and then of looking at their blessings through diminishing lenses. A cheerful heart always finds brightness, while an unhappy spirit sees nothing but discouragement in even the most favorable conditions. One person is happy in the narrowest circumstances, while another is wretched in a luxuriant home with every want supplied. Some persons never see anything to be thankful for. They may attend a service of praise on Thanksgiving Day; but they are not in a joyful mood, and not the first strain of thanksgiving rises from their hearts. They never stop complaining long enough to allow a grateful thought to nest in their hearts. They keep themselves always in such a mood of discontent that no note of praise is ever heard from their lips. One would think, to hear them talk about their trials, that God does not love them, and that no favor ever comes into their lives. Yet really they do not have any more than their share of human suffering, while they certainly have a full portion of blessing and good.

But this is not the way for a Christian to live. We dishonor God when we indulge in unhappiness and refuse to be grateful. We spoil our own lives and make existence wretched for ourselves when we insist on seeing only the black. Then we make it harder for others to live, casting the burden of our gloom upon them. We should train ourselves just as carefully and conscientiously to be thankful and songful as we do to be truthful, honest, kind, or thoughtful.—Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.

LXIV. OUR DIVINE GUIDE.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things."—John 14:26.
"He will guide you into all truth."—John 16:13.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

This supremely important topic was presented along the following lines of cleavage by Rev. J. Otis Barrows, D.D.:

I. He is the spirit of holiness. His name is the Holy Spirit. This is his one comprehensive attribute, holiness. And when he works through men, or with men, he dwells in their hearts. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" exclaims the apostle. And he very positively declares, too, that the temple of God is holy. In the general thought of mankind a temple is a holy place. They may ignorantly pollute it, and still in their thoughts some idea of sanctity is attached to it. This idea reached its extreme limit in the case of the Jews. How sacred was their temple! Paul uses this figure of the temple, so impressive to the Jew, to set forth the absolute necessity for purity in the place where the Spirit of God is to dwell and do his work. How then can the Christian who does not strive for the utmost purity of heart and life ask God to make him instrumental in accomplishing the work of human salvation?

II. But the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of truth. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come," said Jesus. Doubtless working in harmony with the Spirit of God, enables one to come to a more correct knowledge of scientific truth, and a true theology without the inspiring indwelling of the Holy Spirit, seems to be an absurdity; but what we need to notice here is truth inwrought into the life—that which is essential in the bringing of the soul practically into right relations to God. If there be anything in the inmost workings and ways of the heart which is not perfectly frank, clear and truthful, how can there be union with the Spirit of God?

III. But again the Spirit of God is characterized as the working Spirit. Paul says, "but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit." The Holy Spirit is everywhere in the Scriptures represented as energizing. In his mighty working his activity is incessant. Is it possible that the Christian should be of any use who finds nothing to do? Incessant, earnest work is necessary to bring us into harmony with the everworking Spirit. When the apostles waited in Jerusalem until endued with power, what was the power for? We learn from the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

IV. But the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of supplication. "The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." A yearning and an outgoing of desire so intense that it cannot find expression in language! How are we in sympathy with the Spirit of God, if we do not pray earnestly, even with the deepest feeling of which our souls are capable, that the unsaved may yet find mercy? A Christian who does not pray, or only prays for himself, how far is he from any real union with the Holy Spirit in his work?

V. But further the Spirit of God is declared to be the Spirit of harmony. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," says the inspired writer. If we would be one with the Spirit of God in saving man, how completely must all bitterness, jealousy, anger, and strife be put away. Let him who cherishes an unforgiving spirit at once abandon all hope of doing anything in furtherance of the work of God who so loves us in our sin, that his prayer for us is, in intensity and earnestness, something that we are unable to comprehend. The forgiving love of Jesus is the love of the Spirit also. If we have no share with him in this, neither can we have any share with him in his work.

* * *

Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D., said:

I. The Holy Spirit is the minister of enlightenment. He illumines the judgment and fashions our decisions. He opens up buried difficulties and reveals things that have been hid. He unfolds visions of glory and throws heavenly radiance upon the common road. There are three passages in the New Testament where this gracious ministry is expressed. The first is this: "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." The significance of the word "revealed" is to uncover, to make manifest things that are hid. And this may be done in other ways than by throwing a light upon them. We could disclose a buried world to a man by endowing him with a new sense. Let a deaf man go into the woods at the break of day when the birds are waking and beginning to sing. That world of melody is then to him as though it did not exist. And the way to reveal it is by endowing the man with the sense of hearing.

Or let a man devoid of the sense of smell wander over the moor, fragrant with the bog-myrtle and the heather. All these fragrances are to him an unknown world, and the way to reveal them is by endowing him with the sense he lacks. Or let a man go into an orchard abounding in fruit trees, laden with rich varieties of fruit. Let him have no sense of taste and all the delicacies of the orchards are hidden and unknown. Give him a refined and sensitive palate and we reveal to him a new world.

Now our Lord speaks of "the things which he hath prepared for them that love him." It is suggestive of a feast, where all manner of spiritual delights and delicacies are to be found. But the natural man is devoid of the requisite sense and he cannot receive and appreciate them. But the Holy Spirit reveals them unto us by endowing us with the taste we need. He gives us a taste for the Lord's fellowship. We cannot work ourselves up to this mood of appreciation. Common culture cannot give it. It is a gift of the Spirit. The progress of a saint may be measured by the delicacy of his taste and the refinement of his appreciations.

II. And the Holy Spirit also gives us a taste for the King's will. "O how love I thy law!" "I delight to do thy will." "Sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb." And our Lord himself when on earth spoke of the strong, sweet nutriment he found in his holy obedience. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." The Holy Spirit is the appointed minister of grace to give us this spiritual apprehension. He will make us to drink of "the river of God's pleasures." He will bring our tastes into kinship with the tastes of Christ.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Gift of Tongues (484).

When a man has opened himself to the inbreathings of the divine Spirit, when he begins to know by sweet and wonderful consciousness that Christ is in him, when the grand liberty of the sons of God has broken the shackles from his soul, then does he not begin to speak with new and other tongues? With the tongue of a deep personal experience, with the tongue of joy, with the tongue of triumph—with such new tongues he does begin to speak. In this meaning the gift of the tongues remains.—Wayland Hoyt, D.D.

Spirit's Power Necessary (485).

Recently, I visited Fort Monroe and was taken through those interesting barracks. An officer pointing out a great gun said to me: "With that we could tear to pieces yonder wall of stone and destroy many lives thousands of yards away." A friend standing near said: "Not so; that gun itself is powerless." "Oh," the officer exclaimed, "of course we must first place the powder and the shell in it, and then the disastrous work will be done." The reply was made: "All of your guns and powder and shell are absolutely powerless to make any impression in themselves. There is one thing lacking." "Yes," he said, "but a spark of fire would hurl forth the missile of death and bring about the great destruction." We may have big guns in the pulpit, and in the pew, we may have the finest machinery and external equipment; but unless we have the fire of the Spirit we can never shatter the strongholds of Satan and bring in the reign of our Spiritual King.—H. Allen Tupper.

The Gift of the Spirit (486).

And the distinguishing feature of this gift of the Spirit is that it is always ethical in its working. Too frequently the program of ecstasies, raptures, voices, has summed up our thought in the matter. But the gift of the Holy Spirit demands a spirit of righteousness in us. The fruit of its working is also ethical. There was Barnabas, of whom it was said, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost." Everything else said of this man in the New Testament is of a practical and ethical character. We find in him, therefore, a good biblical definition of what it is to be "full of the Holy Ghost." A modern case is to be found in the life of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. The Duke of Argyle said of this Christian: "All the great reforms of the past fifty years have been brought about, not by the Liberal Party, nor by the Tory Party, but by the labors of one man—the Earl of Shaftesbury."—Selected.

Power (487).

We can hardly imagine one so foolish as to attempt to run heavy machinery by hand when wires but await connection to convey the irresistible electric current from the dynamos of the great power house, but most people are living in just such a neglectful, shortsighted way. What an inspiration it is to meet the men and women whose lives are filled with divine power and love and passion for serving and who are doing the great and transforming work of the world!—Selected.

Our Entire Dependence on Him (488).

On Sunday, March 6th, 1881, a barque was wrecked off the north coast of Scotland. Fishermen on shore made several vain attempts to get a line on board by means of the rockets, but the wind was too strong. They succeeded at last, however, by using an empty barrel. There were eleven men on board, but only four or five were able to do anything, the remainder being helpless from the cold. As soon as the apparatus was in working order for the traveling cage which was to be drawn along the rope, one young sailor was put into it, and a few minutes found him on shore in the hands of kind friends.

This first man was scarcely saved, when, through the tide and the wind, the ship was swung round among the rocks, and the traveling apparatus becoming entangled across her bow, was rendered unmanageable.

Then we saw through the drifting snow a man descend from the vessel, and try to save himself by coming along the rope hand over hand, but alas, such an attempt was evidently useless. The waves were beating over him like falling houses, and the poor fellow had gone but a little distance from the ship, when the heavy seas swept over him and in a few seconds he dropped into the surging waves. A few moments after this, the bow of the ship lifted again over the rocks and soon the apparatus was disentangled, and again workable, and all of the others were safely brought to shore. We asked the captain about the lost man. He said, "We tried to persuade him not to attempt such a useless task, as it would be impossible for him to reach the shore in that way, but he would not listen to us. A fine fellow he was," added the captain, "the best man in the crew; but he was lost, because he tried to save himself in his own way." Yes, all the rest were saved, but by other hands than their own.

Human powers are wholly inadequate for human needs. To rely upon them is to invite and insure spiritual disaster.

But divine resources are amply sufficient, and these divine resources —the power of an indwelling Christ—are ours for the taking.—J. H. Tremont, D.D.

The Breath of God (489).

But when the breath comes, how then? The breath of God converts an organization into an organism, it transforms a combination into a fellowship, a congregation into a church, a mob into an army. That breath came into a little disciple-band, a band that was worm-eaten by envy and jealousy, and weakened by timidity and fear, and it changed it into a spiritual army that could not be checked or hindered by "the world, the flesh, and the devil." And when the same breath of God comes into a man of many faculties and talents, sharpened by culture, drilled and organized by discipline, it endows him with the veritable power of an army and makes him irresistible. "And Peter, filled with the holy breath!" How can we compute the value and significance and the power of that unifying association? Peter himself becomes an army, "an army of the living God." If the church were filled with men of such glorious spiritual endowment, what would be the tale of exploits, what new chapters would be added to the Acts of the Apostles?—"Things that Matter Most," by J. H. Jowett, D.D

Weak Without the Spirit (490).

"Why has your church lost the enthusiasm for souls that characterized it in the early centuries, when its members were everywhere active in telling men of Christ?" L. D. Wishard asked an Armenian priest in Turkey. "We are not an educated people," was the reply. "What evidence have we that the early witnesses who were so successful were educated men?" again asked Mr. Wishard. "We have no railroad facilities such as you have in America, and so are handicapped in our work," the priest returned, shifting his ground. "What railroads did they have in the first century?" persisted Mr. Wishard. "Ah, brother, those men had a relation with God and the Holy Spirit which we do not have," then replied the priest.—Augsburg Teacher.

Indwelling (491).

The wonder is that God is willing to live in lives like ours. But this was the glory of the creation and it is the miracle of the incarnation. Into our human life, into our human hearts, one by one, God condescends to come. There could not be any marvel greater than this, except the marvel of our blindness and wickedness in keeping out what is so ready to come in. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him." This is the richest offer that can be made to life. Into the poor shack of manhood, decrepit and unsightly at its best when untenanted by God, God's Spirit offers to come to make it great and glorious and to flood it with beauty and peace. Oh, let us open wide to the inpouring of that which makes of each of us a temple of the divine.—Selected. —Selected.

Enduement (492).

The Holy Spirit quickens the utterance; he unlooses the tongue, and we speak with a tongue of fire. Our speech is "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Here is the secret of power in service. The Lord bade the disciples tarry "until they were endued with power from on high;" and they were to be "witnesses" unto him. This is the grandest result of being filled with the Holy Ghost—we are qualified to be his witnesses. The secret of power in winning souls is not intellect, learning, culture, human eloquence—it is simply and solely the Holy Spirit. A supernatural gospel must be accompanied with a supernatural energy, and then it overcomes the natural heart. All our preaching and teaching, even though it be of the truth of God, is but as sounding brass till God's Spirit puts a divine soul into the utterance. Then we may speak with an ungrammatical, uncultured tongue; but the power of God will go with it.—Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.

LXV. THE LIFE OF ABIDING.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."—John 15:5.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. F. Jenness presented this truth in the following forcible way: How often have I joined with others in singing, "What a friend we have in Jesus," or, "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus!" How eagerly have I read the passages in the Bible which remind me of his friendship for the sinner, or of his proposal to take his disciples into that dear relationship with himself, calling them no more servants, but friends! How my heart has burned within me as I have meditated upon the great privilege of having the Son of God for my friend! How glad I am when the opportunities come to give testimony to the loyalty of the friendship of Jesus!

But how about the other side of the compact? I. If I accept his friendship, with all its benefits, does he not expect me to show some proof of my friendship for him? Does Jesus want to have me as his friend? Is there any sense in which he needs the help which my poor friendship brings?

When he was on earth, Jesus gave evidence of his desire for human friendship. There were certain ones whom he called to be his disciples, but he also said to them, "Ye are my friends." His purpose in calling them was not only that he might show his friendship for them by becoming their teacher and guide; he needed their friendship and the inspiration and help which true friendship brings.

Jesus loved to be with his friends at Bethany! When the day's work in Jerusalem was over, gladly his feet turned toward the little village where Lazarus and Martha and Mary were waiting with friendship's welcome.

John responded more readily and more fully to his Master's need for friendship than did the others of his daily company. Hence he was called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Friendship understands without the need of wordy explanations. The sadness of the misunderstood was in the heart of Jesus when he said to one of those who should have understood him best, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?"

Jesus wants to have friends in the world today, and he has shown what tests of friendship he expects his disciples to meet. "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you." Friendship may be expressed in words, but it is proved only by loyalty in conduct. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

II. Friendship has love as its foundation, and "love is the giving away of self. In this Jesus has met the test. He literally gave himself away for the sake of those to whom he would prove his friendship. He gave himself in service for those who were needy, and men began to say, "Behold

a friend of sinners." His very life he gave in proof of his love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But God commendeth his own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Surely such love demands some return. The question which the song writer puts into the lips of Jesus is a pertinent one:

I gave, I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for me?

III. If I am a friend of Jesus, that fact will make it possible for me to render efficient service to those about me who are in need of him. A Christian woman was trying to lead to Christ a girl who had wandered far in the ways of sin, pleading with her to come back to her mother's God and seek pardon and peace through Christ. Suddenly the girl turned and asked:

"And have you been to him?"

"Yes, indeed, I have."

"And has he given you rest?"

"He has, O, thank God, he has! He is my Saviour and friend."

"Then take me with you. It would be easier to go with one who has been there before."

If I am a friend of Jesus, I can take my friends to him. If I am his friend, I can lift him up, and he has promised that if he is lifted up, he will draw all men unto himself. When I remember how many there are in the circles in which my life is lived who have need of him, and that he expects me to make him known to them, I am constrained to show by every possible word and deed that I am his friend.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren in preaching on this theme said: I am afraid that very few so-called Christian people habitually feel, as they might do, the depths and blessedness of this abiding. And sure I am that only a very small percentage of us have anything like the continuity of companionship which is possible. There may be, and therefore there should be, running unbroken through a Christian life, one long, bright line of communion with Christ and happy inspiration from the sense of his presence with us. Is it a line in my life, or is there but a dot here and a dot there, and long breaks between?

The long, embarrassed pauses in a conversation between two who do not know much of, or care much for, each other are only too like what occurs in many professing Christians' intercourse with Christ. Their communion is like those time-worn inscriptions that archæologists dig up, with a word clearly cut and then a great gap, and then a letter or two and then another gap, and then a little bit more legible, and then the stone broken, and all the rest gone.

Did you ever read the meteorological reports in the newspapers and observe a record like this: "Twenty minutes' sunshine out of a possible eight hours?" Do you not think that such a state of affairs is a little like the experience of a great many Christian people in regard to their fellowship with Christ? It is broken at the best, and imperfect at the completest, and shallow at the deepest. O dear brethren, rise tc the

height of your possibilities, and live as close to Christ as he lets you live, and nothing will much trouble you!

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Stayed on Christ (493).

Mr. Gladstone had, for forty years, on the wall of his bedroom this text: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." These were the first words on which the great statesman's eyes opened every morning, and they were one of the sources of his calm strength.—Sunday School Chronicle.

Abiding in Christ (494).

One afternoon, in an inland city in China, feeling almost in spiritual despair, I was reading the sixth chapter of St. John and came across a verse which struck me as it had never done before. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." Reading it in the original, my mind was carried on by the verb from the sixth to the fifteenth chapter and I saw at once—why! here is a little light on this great and difficult problem. I have evidently been making a mistake about this subject of "abiding in Christ."

I had thought that abiding in Christ meant keeping our hearts so fixed upon Christ, so constantly meditating upon him and dwelling in him, that we never lose the consciousness of his presence. Now what I thought was abiding I have since seen was feeding upon Christ. Feeding is a voluntary act. We go to the table and sit down and partake of what is there. That is a voluntary act. But the man who wanted to feed all day, and to feed all the night too, wouldn't be a desirable member of any community. That was what I was trying to do, and because I could not manage it, I would get into a sort of almost religious dyspepsia.

I had a little hospital and dispensary work that kept me busy. Perhaps a man would be brought into the place with an artery cut and in imminent danger; within half an hour the question whether he would live or die would be settled, and one's whole attention would be wrapped up in the patient, and one would not think of anything else until the result was known; and then the thought would steal over me, "Why for two hours I haven't thought about Jesus," and I would go off into my closet almost in despair and confess this sin. I was in great distress indeed. I wanted to be feeding at the table all the time. Now if a man has two or three square meals every day, and perhaps a lunch or two between, he ought to be able to go to work.

Abiding in Jesus is not fixing our attention on Christ, but it is being one with him. And it doesn't make any difference what we are doing or whether we are asleep or awake. A man is abiding just as much when he is sleeping for Jesus as when he is awake and working for Jesus. O, it is a very sweet thing to have one's mind just resting there!—Rev. J. Hudson Taylor.

Strength Through Abiding (495).

Dr. Jowett spends two hours every morning in prayer and fellowship with Christ. No wonder people "hear him gladly." Horace Bushnell passed from experience to experience until for him the indwelling Christ

became the theme and inspiration of his preaching. The nearness of Christ laid hold of him. "Daily we Sinais climb and know it not." Dwight L. Moody lived in conscious constant partnership with God. "If God be your partner make your plans large," he wrote on the margin of his Bible. George Mueller lived in constant realization of the promise, "Ask and ye shall receive," because he buried self in asking.

To fellowship with Christ and watch with him does not mean always that we make a set hour be his; all might not choose that way. He can be yours at your toil. As you run your lathe, as you drive your team, as you sew a garment, or rock a child to sleep, his name may be on your forehead, ay, graven upon your heart, his song may be on your lips, your heart be "singing all the time."

The Christ Within (497).

If Christ be in you, living, reigning there absolutely, and you are obeying him, that fact will be evident. You cannot hide Christ if once he comes within. If the light be there, it simply must shine. There is no such thing as long-continued secret discipleship. Nicodemus will be a secret disciple, and so will Joseph of Arimathæa, but when the crisis comes, and all the rest have run away, they will beg the Master's body, and bear it tenderly to the burial.—Rev. G. Campbell Morgan.

Surrender and Gain (498).

"I gave up all for him," said John Calvin, "and what have I found? I have found everything in him." Having Christ, being in him, we need no more. The heart knows its possession, and that is enough.

The Great Companion (499).

A happy Christian one day met an Irish peddler, and exclaimed: "It's a grand thing to be saved." "Eh?" said the peddler; "it is, but I know something better than that." "Better than being saved?" said he. "What can you possibly know better than that?" "The companionship of the Man who has saved me!" was the unexpected reply.—Selected.

Rest and Recuperation in Christ (500).

The wires get tired, the telegraph operators tell us, and they say that after a wire has been constantly in use, transmitting messages for a long time, it needs rest. After that, they go ahead again and do their work far better. And there is a belief, pretty well founded, that other things than telegraph wires need a day of rest now and then. Barbers think their razors work better after they have been laid aside for a while. Automobiles kept all the time in use, tire so that they do not obey the commands of the driver as they once did.

And how tired these old bodies of ours do get sometimes! Day after day in these strenuous times we fairly long for a moment when we can just lay our heads down close to the bosom of old Mother Earth and be still. After such a time of resting we go back strong to do the work that comes to us.

But the sorest weariness is that which comes to the heart. The days have been so hard! Things have come to try us as we never were tried before. Passion's hot tide has swept over us, and we are conscious that

somehow the current of power is weak within us. What shall we do now?

What but creep away from the world and its glare and glitter and be alone with Christ.—Selected.

Keeping One's Life In Tune (501).

Pianos have to be kept in tune. Every now and then the tuner comes and goes over all the strings, keying them up so that there will be no discords when the instrument is played. Our lives have a great many more strings than a piano and more easily get out of tune. Then they begin to make discords and the music is spoiled. We need to watch them carefully; to keep their strings always up to concert pitch.

One way in which a piano is put out of tune is by use. The constant striking of the strings stretches them and they need to be keyed up from time to time. Life's common experiences have an exhausting effect. It is said of Jesus that "virtue went out of him" as he went about healing those who were sick. Virtue always goes out of us as we work, as we sympathize with our pain or sorrow, as we minister to others, as we strive and struggle. Duty drains our life fountains. We need to come into his presence to be spiritually renewed. The other day a young woman whose work is very hard, with long hours and incessant pressure, took a little time from her noon hour to call upon an older friend, saying: "I felt that if I could see you for five minutes, to get an encouraging word, I could get through the afternoon better." What is true of a human friend is true yet more of God. If we can get a little while with him when we are weary, when our strength is running low, our life will be put in tune so that the music will be sweet again. We can not afford to live a day without communion with Christ, to get his strength, joy and peace into our hearts.

Henry Ward Beecher tells of visiting a painter. "I saw on his table some high-colored stones, and I asked him what they were for. He said they were to keep his eye up to tone. When he was working in pigments, insensibly his sense of color was weakened, and by having a pure color near him he brought it up again, just as the musician by his test fork brings himself up to the right pitch. Now every day men need to have a sense of the invisible God. No nature is of such magnitude that it does not need daily to be tuned, chorded, borne up to the idea of a pure and lofty life.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

LXVI. THE CONQUEST OF ADVERSITY.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."—John 16:33.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, D.D., comments as follows: With what frankness Christ tells that the vessel of the Church shall not move over smooth seas, with favoring breezes filling her sails till she reaches the desired haven. No, not thus, but on the contrary, wind and wave shall often threaten shipwreck and disaster, though all be well at last. Listen to these words of the Lord Jesus, you who, like Baruch, Jer. xlv. 3, are moaning, "Woe is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow!" Listen to the Lord's words you who, like David, are saying, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul!"

Perhaps your desponding heart replies, "This is tantalizing me, not helping. For he may well overcome, but that is not the same as my overcoming!" Is it not? Think again,—think better of the Lord's most gracious words. Did he not say, "Because I live, ye shall live also?" Every branch in the Vine is one with the Vine. Every believing sinner is a branch in the Vine. You were united to Christ the first moment you leaned on him. The Holy Spirit who led you to Christ did also unite you to him; and that union stands fast, however great be your trials and tribulations.

It was in your feeble nature that he overcame tribulation,—tribulation ten thousand times more terrible than yours,—and he is following up his victory when from day to day the feeblest disciple, simply leaning on him, is shown to be mightier than all hell, and stronger than the world. He would lose his fame as conqueror if you, a member of his body, were to fail.

* * *

Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, D.D., says: In Germany, in a laboratory, a scientist showed me the new foods—the substitutes for the slow, tardy growths in field and vineyard. What capsules of dry powder! What combinations of chemicals to take the place of meat and bread! What foods in glass jars and chemicals in tin cans! Tried by all known food tests, these chemicals satisfied fully nature's demands. But looking at the capsules and dry powders and canned portions, I thought of the difference between the way man manufactures foods and how God grows foods.

I thought of the Concord grapes and the Catawbas, of the winesap apple and the Crawford peach, of the strawberry and the pomegranate, of the nectarine and the cantaloupe. Over against the mucilage capsules I put the raspberry and the blackberry, and over against the chemical pellets I put the pear and the plum. It is ugliness against beauty, ashes against ambrosia, gall against nectar, sawdust against strawberry, death against life.

How empty all modern substitutes for character! How futile are makeshifts of science in place of the eternal realities of God! Even Christ

was made perfect through suffering, and the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. And who, therefore, are these radiant ones about the throne of God? Are these they who have never known the brand of pain or the stain of suffering? No, these are they who came out of great tribulation and have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. These are they who were mobbed in Iconium, stoned in Lystra, burned in Ephesus, imprisoned in Rome, flogged in London, and assassinated in Washington! And who is this that cometh out of Edom, with garments that were dyed crimson from Bozrah? This is he who was slain for our transgressions, and on the cross spread wide his arms to lift us back to his Father's side.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Weaving In Shadow (502).

In one of the famous lace shops of Brussels there are certain retired rooms devoted to the weaving of the finest and most delicate lace patterns. These rooms are altogether darkened save for the light from one small window falling directly upon the pattern. There is only one lace-maker in the room, and she sits where the narrow stream of light falls upon the thread she is weaving. "Thus," the guide explains, "do we secure our choicest products. Lace is always more delicately and beautifully woven when the worker is in the dark and only her pattern is in the light."

Does not the same beautiful and mysterious result appear in work of any kind, when surrounding shadows compel the toiler to fix his attention solely upon the task in hand—the task upon which falls the concentrated light of life? When a soul finds itself shut in by disappointments, trials, bereavements, or physical limitations to its divinely appointed task, the one thing it is best fitted to do or teach in this world, how marvelously the pattern is wrought! What new power and beauty appear in both work and character! That one small window through which falls the light of heaven full upon our task is often the essential condition of highest achievements!—The Continent.

Delicately Adjusted Treatment (503).

The more one knows of the most afflicted lives, the more often the conviction flashes across us that the affliction is a delicately adjusted treatment. I remember that once a friend of mine was sent a rare plant, which he set in a big flowerpot close to a fountain basin. It never throve; it lived, indeed, putting out in the spring a delicate, stunted foliage, though my friend, who was a careful gardener, could never discover what ailed it. He was away for a few weeks, and the day after he was gone the flowerpot was broken by a careless garden boy, who wheeled a barrow roughly past it. The plant, earth and all, fell into the water; the boy removed the broken pieces of the pot, and, seeing that the plant had sunk to the bottom of the little pool, never troubled his head to fish it out.

When my friend returned, he noticed one day in the fountain a new and luxurious growth of some unknown plant. He made careful inquiries, and found out what had happened. It then came out that the plant was in reality a waterplant, and that it had pined away in the stifling air for want of nourishment, perhaps dimly longing for the fresh bed of the pool.

Even so it has been times without number with some starving and thirsty soul that has gone on feebly trying to live a maimed life, shut up in itself, ailing, feeble. There has descended upon it what looks at first sight like a calamity, some affliction unaccountable, and then it proves that this was the one thing needed; that sorrow has brought out some latent unselfishness, or suffering energized some unused faculty of strength and patience.—Christian Intelligencer.

Helped by Hindrances (504).

Thompson, the devoted Edinburgh medical missionary, speaks of the cost of giving up a boy's social gathering for games and reading, because the desired ends seemed not to be reached. A year or two afterward he started morning classes which proved a great success. A German countess was imprisoned, by those who would break up her Christian work among neglected sailors and fishermen, in a mad-house. Her plans were broken. But when her release came, the story of her awful treatment led to laws which prevented the like outrages, and provided inspection of lunatic asylums and awakened so much sympathy and interest in her work that she was able to do thrice as much as she did before. Both were hindered that they might be given larger things.

The Gain of the Dark Room (505).

Darkness seems to be as necessary to life and growth in this world as is light. A worker for Christ who has recently suffered months of illness, writes a cheery word of sympathy to a fellow sufferer, and adds: "It is a long time since I have done a day's work; it is only a half hour's work, or maybe fifteen minutes at a time. And many days I have been in a dark room. I wonder, sometimes, if a dark room is as necessary for the developing of characters as it is for the development of negatives. If so, perhaps a time will come when I can look back upon the dark-room days with thankfulness. Just now, I want to work." To wait and trust God, even while one longs to be out in the light and at work, is to gain and grow in the development which only the dark room can give. How good it is that God can be trusted to decide when the darkness is needed! —Sunday School Times.

The Cost of Love-Service (506).

At the coronation of English monarchs it has been long the custom to place a wedding-ring upon the ruler's left hand, implying thereby that he was married to his country, and must serve it as a husband his wife. When Queen Victoria was crowned the ring was found to be a trifle too small, but was nevertheless pressed on, causing the young queen no little pain. But on all hands her courtiers assured her it was a happy omen, for the tradition of the ring declares that the closer it fits the more beloved the monarch will be. How suggestive of that service, the noblest of all that we can render, the service that means soul-agony, heart-strain.

In Training (507).

A recent writer, who had found in a newspaper an item about a violin-maker who always went into the forest himself and chose his violin woods from the north side of the trees, writes: "You don't think

anything about it now; it probably isn't true. But I'll wager that never again will you wake in the night to listen to the wind without thinking of the great storm-tossed, moaning, groaning, slow-toughening forest trees —learning to be violins!"—Young People.

Serene in Trouble (508).

The subtleties of the human heart are most perplexing. On the surface it would seem that cheerfulness depends on happy circumstances, good health, or great prosperity. Yet this is not an absolute rule, for cheerfulness is often found where these things are lacking.

I used to visit a woman engaged in a "sweated industry." She lived in a small, ill-lighted, unsanitary room in a slum. She worked through the weary days, and knew nothing of holidays. Her wage was small, her occupation precarious and her health indifferent; yet she would work away, singing hymns, her favorite hymn being:

"I feel like singing all the time,
My tears are wiped away,
For Jesus is a friend of mine,
I'll praise him all the day."

She was one of the happiest beings I have ever known. What was her secret? What prompted her happiness? It was religion. The religion of Christ is the supreme factor in inspiring cheerfulness in adversity.

Herein is the chief glory of Christianity; its message of good cheer. When Jesus came to humanity, the world was shrouded in dull care. Cheerfulness was associated with sensual pleasure. God was a mystery, the future life black with uncertainty. Jesus came—the Light of the world—and at his coming the angel declared to the shepherds: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy."

He was not, as art has so often represented him, steeped in austere gloom, with a face of pathetic sorrow; rather was he radiant with peace and joy. He saw the love of his Father in all nature, in the lilies of the field, and in the birds of the air. He was supremely cheerful in adversity. Even when over him there fell the shadow of the cross, and he knew he must tread the sorrowful way, he said to his disciples: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And as a legacy to his Church—to those who had to face persecution and stress for him—he bequeathed his peace. "Let not your heart be troubled." "My peace I give unto you."—Rev. G. E. Walters.

Learning Obedience Through Suffering (509).

A lady was summering in Switzerland. One day she started out for a stroll. Presently, climbing the mountain side, she came to a shepherd's hut. She walked to the door and looked in. There sat the shepherd. Near at hand, on a pile of straw, lay a single sheep. Scanning it closely, the lady saw that its leg was broken. At once her sympathy went out to the suffering sheep. She looked up inquiringly to the shepherd. "How did it happen?" she said. To her amazement, the shepherd answered, "Madam, I broke that sheep's leg." A look of pain swept over the visitor's face. Seeing it, the shepherd went on: "Madam, of all the sheep in my

flock, this one was the most wayward. It never would obey my voice. It never would follow in the pathway, but wandered to the verge of many a perilous cliff and dizzy abyss. And not only was it disobedient itself, but it was ever leading the other sheep of my flock astray. I had before had experience with sheep of this kind. So I broke its leg. The first day I went to it with food, it tried to bite me. I left it alone for a couple of days. Then I went back to it. And now, it not only took the food, but licked my hand, and showed every sign of submission and even affection. And now let me tell you something. When this sheep is well, as it soon will be, it will be the model sheep of my flock. No sheep will hear my voice so quickly. None will follow so closely at my side. Instead of leading its mates astray, it will now be an example and a guide for the wayward ones, leading them, with itself, in the path of obedience to my call. In short, a complete transformation will have come into the life of this wayward sheep. It has learned obedience through its sufferings."—Selected.

Radiant in Tribulations (510).

A woman, until her eighteenth year, was so beautiful in face and form that no one could pass her by unnoticed. I saw her on her wedding day and she seemed the most exquisite of brides. She went to the home of her husband and entered into society and became a leader in a refined and intellectual circle. One day in church, at worship, she was suddenly attacked by sharp pain. From that moment, so long as she lived, she was never free for an instant from a torturing agony that confined her to her couch day and night. A strange malady had attacked the spinal marrow. Her poor hands were so twisted that she never liked anyone to see them, but her beautiful face grew more and more radiant in its spirituality, so that it was like the face of an angel. Her home, of which she could see only one room, was perfectly appointed, and she directed its movement and its ordering with entire serenity so long as she lived. She kept in touch with her child's education, always knowing what he studied and sending for his teachers and professors that she might confer with them, from the time of the primary school until he was graduated by the university. No one ever heard her complain, and it was her husband's summing up of her years of physical anguish that they had been years spent so near to Jesus that the house had been like heaven.—Margaret E. Sangster.

Tested Because Trusted (511).

A father who was an officer in the Union Army, with his son under him, wrote out an order, called his son, and said, "Deliver this to the general down on the firing-line." The young man placed the message under his belt, mounted his horse, and rode away. The enemy's bullets flew thick and fast while he made the dangerous ride. The father stood and watched, and waited, and wondered, while that strange conflict raged in his soul that must take place where the father and the officer are one person, and the son and subaltern the other, and that son exposed to danger by the father's command. At last the son rode back into his father's presence with his foam-covered horse and dismounted. The father threw his arms about his boy's neck, and said, "My son, I did not want you killed, but I had to send a man that I could trust." God's bravest and best soldiers are in the hard places.—The Changeless Christ.

LXVII. MEN'S MOTHERS

(Mothers' Day).

"Son, Behold Thy Mother."—John 19:27.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

When we remember human nature's tendency to run to extremes it is not surprising that one large section of Christendom should worship the Virgin Mary. She was the queen of mothers. Even with the few faint lines with which the Gospels sketch her character, she stands out clearly before us in all her gentle majesty and tender maternal solicitude, "blessed among women," seeking to adjust her thinking to that mysterious miracle of her transcendently unique experience. How much significance there is in those words: "And Mary pondered these things in her heart." And how true it is that the sword that pierces her heart is the sword that pierces the heart of every other worthy mother.

* * *

I. A mother's influence is beyond estimate.

II. A mother's opportunity is priceless.

III. A mother's need of Christ is most urgent.

* * *

I. Why should we celebrate Mothers' Day? Mother's Day comes near to being the holiest day of the three hundred and sixty-five. There is nothing in the civil calendar to equal it, and in the ecclesiastical, it stands next to Christmas and Easter. Though opposed to the addition of any more special days to the over-crowded year, we are ready to say to the man or woman who conceived this, "Blessed art thou." For we believe it not only does homage to the divinest being in the world, but, also, has within itself the promise and potency of the re-enthronement of motherhood to its God-appointed place.

The enriching years have brought to us increasing respect for, and sympathy with, our neighbors who pay homage to the Mother of our Lord. Making a place for her in their liturgy responds to a want of the human heart. And in the celebration of Mothers' Day, we meet them half-way; and we greet first the Madonna of Bethlehem, and then the Madonna of our childhood home with "Blessed art thou among women!"

II. Make this a day of coronation. Kiss the hand that may have occasionally chastised you for your own good, but which always served you with the unique skill of maternal love. The more wrinkled it is, the diviner it is. Place a coronet of forget-me-nots upon her head, or a garland of roses around her neck. Once each year, at least, say: "Mother, I thank you." By some manifestation of gratitude, reassure her of your unquenchable love.

III. And there are mothers by adoption; those who for some cause or other have been led to supply a mother's place, like Mrs. Augustus Hare, portrayed in that charming book of English life, "Memorials of a Quiet Life." Without a child of her own, she adopted a relative's son, named him Augustus W. Hare, and poured upon him a wealth of affection that nurtured him into the useful and noble man that he became.

In the roll of heroines there are hundreds of "near" mothers. If you are indebted to one of them, take advantage of this day, and do her homage. And think of the beautiful young mothers who laid down their lives in giving birth to a child! Make this a Memorial Day and lay a flower upon their graves.—N. B. Rennick.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Mother's Day (512).

The second Sunday in May is the day for the annual, general recognition of Mother's Day. A woman originated it. She was Miss Anna M. Jarvis of Philadelphia. Here is the story of the start as narrated in the Congregationalist: "Good motherhood is the basis of all our prosperity." In this single sentence, Miss Anna M. Jarvis, originator of Mother's Day, expressed at once her economic creed and the loving inspiration for her noble idea. Of course the conception could have sprung from only one source—the undying influence of some good mother over her child. That child was Miss Jarvis. Between Mrs. Jarvis and her daughter there must have obviously been unusual ties, an intimacy and comradeship that even death could not wholly disperse. "She was an old-fashioned mother," said Miss Jarvis, "home and Sunday School were her chief interests."

Indeed, down in the West Virginia home the mother had taught an infants' class so many years that, at the last, she was guiding the children's children, doubling her influence on a second generation!

Mindful of the little ones whom her mother loved, Miss Jarvis had provided for the memorial service a beautiful array of white carnations, to be distributed among the children at the close of the service. "If to the children, why not to every one?" suggested another loving friend of the dead. And so this "mother's service" was observed, quietly and in honor of a single faithful mother.

But the little episode of the white carnations and her continuing love for her departed parent brought suggestion to Miss Jarvis. Why should we wait till these dear queens of our homes had laid down their scepters forever to do them more than the everyday honors? Thus it was that Mother's Day gradually took form. First, the date had to be selected.

"May seems in many ways a memorial month," said Miss Jarvis. "Indeed, practically the whole month is given over to the commemoration of Mary, the Divine Mother, among our Catholic friends. Then, too, it does not interfere with any of our Protestant occasions. And, lastly, it is a kind of link between the spirit of Easter and Children's Sunday." So Miss Jarvis chose the second Sunday in May for a great new Memorial Day which leaps across national frontiers and stops not at oceans or continents.

Only One Mother (513).

There are thousands of stars that shine at night,
Thousands of flowers that make summer bright;
Thousands of dewdrops the morning greet,
Thousands of birds with voices sweet,
Thousands of bees in the purple clover,
But only one mother the whole world over.

A Mother's Influence (514).

We are told that once in the course of a conversation with Madame Campan, Napoleon Bonaparte remarked, "The old systems of instruction seem to be worth nothing; what is yet wanting in order that the people should be properly educated?" "Mothers," replied Madame Campan. The reply struck the Emperor. "Yes," he said, "here is a system of education in one word. Be it your care, then, to train up mothers who shall know how to educate their children."

And oft, when half allured to tread,
The paths that into sin decoy,
I've felt her soft hand bless my head,
And that fond touch hath saved her boy.
—Anon.

The Story of the Apron String (515).

There was once a little boy who had just learned to walk. He was not very steady upon his feet, so his mother tied her apron string around his waist, and said, "There, little man, when you stumble you can pull yourself up by that, and you will not fall." And the child did as she said, and all went well, and the mother sang as she went about her work.

Day by day the child grew taller, until his head came above the window sill, and often he stood there looking at the green grass, and the yellow flowers, and the trees with their waving branches, and the meadow beyond, and the river singing and shining in the sun, and, far in the distance, the purple mountains piled against the sky. When he saw them he said, "Mother, untie your apron string, and let me go." But the mother said, "Not yet, little man. Only yesterday you stumbled and would have fallen but for this. Wait until you are stronger." And the child did as she said, and all went well, and the mother sang as she went about her work.

Day by day the child grew stronger and taller, and more and more he left playthings at the hearth, and stood at the window. One morning in the springtime the door stood open, and as he stood at the threshold and looked out again, he saw the green grass, and the yellow flowers, and now the trees seemed to beckon with their branches, and he heard the voice of the river as it called, "Come, come, come," and he started so quickly that the apron string snapped, and he ran down the steps with the end dangling behind him. "Ho, ho," he said, "I never knew my mother's apron string was so weak."

The mother gathered her end of the broken apron string, and hid it in her bosom; and she turned again to her work, but sang no longer. The boy ran on, under the trees, over the grass and the meadow, to the river's bank, and then on along the bank toward the purple mountains that were piled against the sky. Sometimes the path was smooth, and he would run. Sometimes it was steep and rocky, and he had to climb on hands and knees. Once it turned suddenly, and came out again upon the river's bank, just where it dashed over a great precipice. The way was full of mist, and the rocks were wet and slippery. He made a

mis-step, but just as he slipped over the brink of the abyss, something caught upon the point of a rock and held him dangling over the precipice. He put his hand to see what it was, and found it was the broken apron string still tied to his waist. "Ho, ho," he said, "I never knew how strong my mother's apron string was." And he pulled himself up by it, and set his feet firmly upon the rock, and went on toward the purple mountains that were piled against the sky.—Laura Richards.

The Mother's Question (516).

In a time of cholera a mother lost her two children in one day. When at night her husband came from his business in the city, she said to him, "A friend lent me some jewels, and he now wishes to receive them again. What shall I do?" "Return them by all means," said her husband. Then she led the way to another room, and pointed to the silent forms of their children—S. S. Chronicle.

Mother Influence (517).

Orison Swett Marden declared that it is a strange fact that our mothers, the molders of the world, should get so little credit and should be so seldom mentioned among the world's achievers. The world sees only the successful son; the mother is but a round in the ladder upon which he climbed. Her name or face is never seen in the papers; only her son is lauded and held up to our admiration. Yet it was that face in the background that made his success possible.

"All that I am or hope to be," said Lincoln, after he had become president, "I owe to my angel mother."

"My mother was the making of me," said Thomas A. Edison, recently. "She was so true, so sure of me; and I felt that I had some one to live for; some one I must not disappoint."

"All that I have ever accomplished in life," declared Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist, "I owe to my mother."

"To the man who has had a mother, all women are sacred for her sake," said Jean Paul Richter.

"A kiss from my mother made me a painter," said Benjamin West.

Plaster Honor (518).

A talented but obscure Greek sculptor was commissioned by another more renowned to execute a statue to be set up in the market-place. But the obscure one was not to have the credit of his work; the name of the renowned one was to be fixed to the statue. And the statue was set up, praised, and the famous sculptor got all the honor. As the years went on, however, the winds and frosts and rains did their work, and the name on the statue cracked and crumbled and at last it fell off, and the name of the true artist was seen behind, cut into the imperishable stone. The false name had been cut in plaster only. We often think of that story as we read biographies. When we notice how the hero's greatness is ascribed to this important personage or that, this mighty incident or that, we wonder within ourselves when will the plaster fall off, and the man's mother receive the honor that is her due? In ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, it is the mother's influence that makes the man. You may not think so now; wait till you are a little older, a little wiser,

till you have found out a little more what sharp edges there are in the world, and until your eyes have been cleansed by some scalding tears, then the plaster-work of your life will drop, and behind it all you will see, and see with reverence, your mother's name—the name of the one to whom you owe all that is best in your character. Oh, mothers, mothers!—be mothers; no better prayer can be prayed for you.—Selected.

The Mother Stayed (519).

I remember once in Edinburgh, at a meeting in the parish church, the veteran evangelist, Richard Weaver, was preaching. The large church was crowded, and several mothers were there with their infants. One young mother, who had her baby with her, was a poor workingman's wife and had either to stay at home with her baby and miss the service, or bring the little one with her. So to the church she came, but about midway through the service the youngster, with a pair of good, strong lungs, sent forth more noise than music. Many of the people frowned and scowled, and every one of the two thousand turned to stare at mother and child. The mother arose to leave the building. But Weaver would not permit it. "God bless you, mother!" shouted the evangelist. "God bless you, come back and take your seat, and God bless your child!" The young mother came back and the child slept peacefully and quietly on its mother's breast. Then, turning toward the audience, Weaver said: "Will you please cease staring at that mother and mind your own business? Do you know what it cost her to be here tonight? It has cost her a great deal. Now, leave her alone." Then looking up toward the gallery, he again said: "God bless you, mother, and God bless your child!"—Selected.

Mothers Do Care (520).

"I never would have done it if I had known mother would care so much." So a foolish girl is reported to have said on her return home from a runaway absence of six days, that drove her family frantic, jeopardized the very life of her invalid father, and reduced her careworn mother to the depths of grief and fear. Of this incident, the Cleveland News says:

Perhaps none but a mother can really know how much mothers care, but only supreme thoughtlessness, not to say selfishness, could ignore the fact that they do care. It should be evident to every child, it should form his earliest memory, his strongest belief, his most powerful motive. But, apparently, it doesn't.

Is it because mother's loving care begins before the beginning, surrounds and protects through all the big and little dangers and trials and fears, and continues strong and unshaken to the very end, that children too often seem to accept it as a natural phenomenon, a matter of course as the beating of their hearts or the succession of days and nights, and no more to be heeded or requited?

"Her love outlasts all other human love,
  Her faith endures the longest, hardest test,
Her grace and patience through a lifetime prove
  That she's a friend. the noblest and the best."

LXVIII. "NONE OTHER NAME."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."—Acts 4:12.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

This uniqueness of Christ's salvation was forcibly brought out in a sermon by Rev. Dr. Jeffry Johnstone. He said: The world has seen many saviours, for whom we thank God, saviours of great cities like Rome, such as Horatius who held the bridge, saviours of great countries like Italy, such as Garibaldi, the simple soldier and liberator; saviours of great numbers of men, such as Simpson, the celebrated surgeon, who made the most dangerous operations possible by the discovery of the use of chloroform. But great as these men were as saviours in their own distinctive spheres, yet they are not to be mentioned in the same breath with Jesus Christ: for the simple reason that their saving work was circumscribed and confined mainly to the bodies of men. Whereas the saving work of Jesus was original in that it embraced body and soul. Indeed his chief aim was to save the soul and in saving the soul save the body also. Great masters of industry speak of their employes as so many hands, and the church speaks of the multitude of uneducated and irreligious people as masses. Jesus never looked at men as hands and he never looked at the multitude as masses. In every child of the human race he saw an immortal soul, a pearl of infinite price, designed to shine, when redeemed, with eternal luster in his crown of glory. The soul he saw beneath the rags of the beggar, beneath the crimes of the greatest criminal, beneath the nakedness and the repulsiveness of the savage, beneath the superciliousness and overrefinement of the dilettante, he came to save by an everlasting salvation and to redeem that soul he gave his life.

* * *

On the theme, "The Indispensable Christ," Rev. Dr. J. R. Miller said:

There are human friendships that seem to be really indispensable. The trusting, clinging wife may say to her husband, who is being taken from her: "I cannot live without you. If you leave me I will die. I cannot face the cold winds without your shelter. I cannot go on with the duties, the burdens, the struggles, the responsibilities, without your comradeship, your love, your cheer, your strong support, your wise guidance." So it seems to her, as she stands amid the wreck of her hopes; but when the strong man on whom she had leaned is gone, the sorrowing woman takes up the tasks, the duties, the burdens, the battles and walks alone, and courage comes into her heart and she grows in heroic qualities. "I never dreamed that I could possibly get along as I have," said a woman the other day, after a year's widowhood. Then she told of her utter faintness when she realized that he was gone. He had been everything to her. She had wanted for nothing, had never known a care. But as she turned away from his grave, it seemed to her that

everything was lost. What could she do? But Christ was with her. Peace came into her heart, calmness came, then courage began to revive. She grew self-reliant and strong. She was a marvel to her friends as she took up the work of her life. She showed resources which none ever imagined she had. The problem of life in such cases as hers is, not to be hurt by the sorrow, but to grow strong in it. This woman's bereavement made her. She lived, and lived grandly, without the one who had seemed absolutely indispensable.

But this is not the case in our relation to Christ. He is indispensable. There is no other name.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Without a Peer (521).

Christ has no rivals. Not that other teachers have not uttered much truth, and some of them had uttered many of the truths which he taught. The fact that the substance of some of Christ's sayings is to be found in the writings of ancient sages does not detract from the worth of Christ as a teacher, nor lower him in the least from his pre-eminence. Our study of him has brought us to see him as the "Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." He was in the world before his incarnation; and I do not hesitate to believe that he was the author of all truth voiced by all the wise teachers of all ages and nations. They were given to see in part what he saw as a whole. They are lights of their times and nations; he is the Light of the world, the Sun that needs not to be jealous of any mind that caught and reflected some of his rays. No one can possibly doubt the fact that for now nearly nineteen hundred years the teachings of Jesus have been the master-force in the world. They have transformed the highest thought of the world; they have set the standards of judgment by which men and institutions have been tested; they have readjusted men's conceptions of God and of man.—J. T. McFarland, D.D.

The Incomparable Friend (522).

"I have found a great Friend, and I want to tell you about him." With these words a man began his talk in the police station of a great city. "It was a straight-arm, parry-and-thrust sort of a sermon," said a visitor, "with such oratory as a man achieves after five years of harranguing a brick wall. But it landed. It was about 'My Friend and your Friend,' who had taken him out of the gutter, and was able to save even unto the police station." And then the visitor, writing in a newspaper, describes the result. When the short sermon was ended, and the leader asked the men to pray with him, every man of the sixteen in the cells went down on his knees, and the prayer was heard in perfect silence, broken only by an occasional sob. The service was repeated in the corridor where the "drunks" were assembled. Boisterous they were at first, but the service calmed them down and at length brought every man to his knees, save one who was too drunk to kneel. Again up stairs, where twenty-seven young girls were, the service brought comfort and hope. "I came away," said the visitor, "thanking God for a religion that is as good in the prison as in the cathedral, and which can tell its story in plain, simple words that go to the heart in its sin and need. In

the presence of what I had seen, theological discussions grew petty. Why should men ask whether mighty works were done in the cities of old when these mightier works are done in the midst of us?"—The Divine Challenge.

Christ Supreme (523).

Senator John J. Ingalls once wrote a statement of his religious convictions, closing with these words: "Jesus is one of the colossal figures in history. Pilate and Herod and Cæsar, the kings, heroes and philosophers of that time, are nothing. No one cares that they lived or died, but millions now would die rather than surrender their faith in Jesus."—Rev. Edwin Whipple Caswell.

Other Foundation There is None (524).

The life that aspires to the loftiest things must have a foundation proportionately deep and substantial. They do not set these modern skyscrapers on the surface, but they sink the mightiest and strongest structural work many feet below the ground and rest it on a substructure of stone and concrete and steel which will give solidity and permanence to the great building above. The reason why so many fail in religion and life is that they have not laid the foundations deep enough.—Selected.

Jesus Over All (525).

In India I saw that monument, the Taj Mahal. In the center of the structure is a piece of marble 16 feet across and 8 or 10 feet high. A Mohammedan guard stands there, and while I was looking up he shouted something about one God and Mohammed his prophet. It echoed and echoed, and we listened. I could not leave with that echoing across the world, and I begged permission to stand where the soldier stood. Reluctantly he consented, "Jesus, highest over all," and it echoed and reechoed to the highest peaks of the Himalayas. That cry is to sound around the world.—Cortland Myers, D.D.

The Divine Christ (526).

General Lew Wallace, in giving an account of his religious experience, said: When I began to write Ben Hur, in 1876, I had reached an age in life when men usually begin to study and reflect on the good they may have done in the world up to that time. Never having read the Bible, I knew little of matters of a religious nature; although I was not in every respect an infidel, I was persistently and notoriously indifferent. I resolved to begin the study of the good Book in earnest. I know I was conscientious in my search for the truth. I weighed, I analyzed, I counted, I compared. The evolution from conjecture into knowledge, through opinion and belief, was gradual but irresistible, and at length I stood firmly and defiantly on the solid rock. I am sure the preparation and completion of Ben Hur, if it has done nothing more, has convinced its author of the divinity of the lowly Nazarene, who walked and talked with God.

For or Against God (527).

Over in France we are told that there are those who so hate all religion that they have tattooed upon their arms two letters that stand

for "Against God." That is shocking to the Christian mind. Yet there are many who are "against God" who do not proclaim it in that way. The worst atheism to be found anywhere is not that which vaunts itself of the fact, but it is the atheism of life—the atheism that leads a man to live as if there were no God. This, after all, has been said, is the important test, whether we live for God or against God. It is an awful thing to tattoo one's self to proclaim one's irreligion, but it is worse to tattoo the soul and to have one's life say, "I am against God."—Selected.

The Unfathomable Christ (528).

A friend of mine, one autumn, was showing me seed from his garden. It was a small seed. The capsule of it was very beautiful; but the seed itself within the capsule—how dainty its shape! and its top pushing up and branching out into feathery filaments, exquisitely adapted to its distribution by the wind. My friend said to me, holding the seed, "How wonderful nature is!" Then he waited an instant, and his voice grew reverent as he added, "Or, as I prefer to say, how wonderful God is!" You see, it was really quite impossible to explain that little seed in the terms of mere nature. When you thoughtfully looked at it, you could not resist the feeling that about that little seed there must have been some divine design and working. You remember that Tennyson sings the same truth:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but, if I could understand,
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

As you cannot explain a flower or a little seed in the terms of a mere nature, so it is utterly impossible to explain the imperial person—Jesus Christ, in the terms of a mere humanity. He is so infinitely more than man.—Wayland Hoyt, D.D.

LXIX. RECOGNITION OF DIVINE HELP.

"Having therefore obtained help of God I continue unto this day."—Acts 26:22.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Preaching on God's providential help and guidance in the lives of individuals, Rev. Dr. Arthur T. Pierson, said:

The word providence literally means forevision, and hence, foreaction—preparation for what is foreseen—and expresses God's invisible rule of this world, including his care, control, guidance, as exercised over both the animate and inanimate creation.

God's providential presence in history is especially evident in the story of missionary work. The biographies of leading missionaries read like chapters where prophecy lights up history. Think of William Carey's inborn adaptation to his work as translator in India, of Livingstone's career as missionary explorer and general in Africa; of Catherine Booth's capacity as mother of the Salvation Army; of Jerry McAuley's preparation for rescue work in New York City; of Alexander Duff's fitness for educational work in India; of Adoniram Judson's schooling for the building of an apostolic church in Burma; of John William's unconscious training for his career as evangelist in the South Seas. Then mark the unity and continuity of labor. See one worker succeed another at crises unforeseen by man, as when Gordon left for the Sudan on the day when Livingstone's death was first known in London, or Pilkington arrived in Uganda the very year when MacKay's death was to leave a great gap to be filled. Then study the theology of inventions, and watch the furnishing of new facilities for the work as it advanced. He who kept back the three greatest inventions of reformation times, the mariner's compass, the steam engine, and the printing press, until his church put on her new garments, waited to unveil nature's deeper secrets, which should make all men neighbors, until the reformed church was mobilized as an army of conquest!

* * *

Rev. Alexander Maclaren, D.D., said, with reference to God's loving interposition on man's behalf:

Our experience yields fuel for our faith. We have been near death many a time! we have never fallen into it. Our eyes have been wet many a time; God has dried them. Our feet have been ready to fall many a time, and if at the moment when we were tottering on the edge of the precipice, we have cried to him and said, "My feet have well-nigh slipped," a strong hand has been held out to us. "The Lord upholdeth them that are in the act of falling," as the old psalm, rightly rendered, has it, and if we have pushed aside his hand, and gone down, then the next clause of the same verse applies, for he "raiseth up those that have fallen," and are lying prostrate.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUHGTS AND INCIDENTS.

"The Unseen Hand" (529).

Mr. Philip Mauro says: "One never-to-be-forgotten evening in New York City, I strolled out in my usual unhappy frame of mind, intending to seek diversion at the theater. This purpose carried me as far as the lobby of a theater on Broadway, and caused me to take my place in the line of ticket purchasers. But an unseen hand turned me aside, and the next thing that I remember I had wandered far from the theater, and my attention was arrested by a very faint sound of singing which came to my ears amid the noises on Eighth Avenue, near Forty-fourth street." A few moments later Mr. Mauro found himself in a prayer meeting and was converted to Christ. The "unseen hand" did it.—John Y. Emert, D.D.

The Trouble Clerk (530).

There is some one in telephone offices, or on call there, who is officially termed the Trouble Clerk. If your 'phone doesn't work, or the lines get crossed, you will probably make her acquaintance. You ask Central what to do, and this clerk is called up, and when you have talked it over, a man is sent out to help you. It is a fine thing to know what to do when one gets into trouble. Just go to headquarters. There is One who will make it his business to help you—he promises it.—Wellspring.

Counting the Benefits (531).

Mark Guy Pearse's little daughter once said to him, "Father, I am going to count the stars." "Very well," he said, "go on." By and by he heard her counting, "Two hundred and twenty-three, two hundred and twenty-five, Oh, dear," she said, "I had no idea there were so many!" And, moved by her experience, he said: "I sometimes say in my soul, 'Now, Master, I am going to count the benefits.' Soon my heart sighs, not with sorrow, but burdened with such goodness, and I say to myself, 'I had no idea that there were so many.'"

Our Father's Care (532).

Our days are in God's hands. And this is not calling us to put on sack-cloth for, if they are in God's hands, they are in good hands. They surely could not be in better keeping. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God." Is it? God is love. Is it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of love? Yes, as a rebel. But for the Christian, it is a blessed experience. For the Christian the fall is a flight, the sinking a soaring, the prostration is a promotion. It means slipping into the clasp of his Father.

Acknowledging God's Care (533).

Let us count up what he has done for us. Let us make confession of his goodness and our indebtedness. Let us begin each day with a new thanksgiving and reckon the future in terms of his abiding presence and helpfulness.—H. Kingman.

Every Man's Life Plan of God (534).

According to the view of one, the circumstances of life are purely accidental. We are in a universe without plan or purpose. Man is a

waif driven hither and yon like a bit of seaweed in the surf, the play of capricious forces.

According to another we are governed but by a force unloving and destructive. A colossal tyrant is enthroned in the heavens, ordering man's hampered and depressing career. There is small gain in this view over the first. As well believe in chaos as in some inquisitor holding his victim on the rack.

But according to the austere and beautiful thought of the prophet, where he compares man to the clay in the potter's hands, the good God is the Power ordering and disciplining man. Hands of love are fashioning the rough materials into vessels of use and beauty.

It is a long process by which the clay from the pit stands on the table at length as a rich and gleaming vase. The shapeless lump must endure the throwing, the turning, the delicate hand work, the glazing, the repeated visits to the fiery furnace. If clay could be endowed with consciousness it must often wonder at its cruel treatment.

Not otherwise men baffled and discouraged by the ways of Providence often ask hard questions. They demand the meaning, if there be any meaning, in such experiences as come to them. Materialism has no semblance of answer. At such times faith is the only key to a great mystery. Beside it unbelief is weakness and impotence complete.

Life may be regarded as a transforming process. A man is a calculated work of his Creator, to whose completion the wisdom and power of God will be devoted. Doubtless not until we can view life from its heavenward side will compensation for our hard discipline be apparent in souls brought into the symmetry and beauty of the Maker's image.—Selected.

God in the World (535).

What we need is a profound faith in God's ruling all things, said General Gordon. John Wesley had that faith when he said, I read my newspaper in order to see how God governs the world.

Cromwell had that faith. What are all our histories, he asked, but God manifesting himself?

Lincoln had that faith. No human council hath devised nor hath any human mind worked out these great things, he declared. They are the gracious gifts of the most high God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. And again he said: Now at the end of three years' struggle the nation's condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected. God alone can claim it. Whither it is tending seems plain. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God.

Is that faith ours? Can we say with Dr. Lyman Abbott: I no longer look back for the evidence that God was in history—though I believe that he was in history—but I look about me to see him in history now.—Tarbell.

Grateful Recognition of God's Goodness (536).

Go, Christian, praise God for past mercies, and it will not be long

before thou hast a new song put into thy mouth for a present mercy. Faith has a good memory, and can tell the Christian many stories of ancient mercies; and when his present meal falls short, it can entertain the soul with a cold dish. God intends more comfort from every mercy he gives than the mercy itself amounts to. He would have thee make it a help to thy faith, and a shore to thy hope, when shaken by any future strait whatsoever. The husbandman does not sell all his corn that he reaps, but saves some for seed, which may bring him another crop; so thou shouldst not only feast thyself with the joy of thy mercy, but save the remembrance as hope-seed.—William Gurnall.

Help Yourself to God (537).

A recent writer tells of one of the noblest of Christian ministers, who awoke one night, several years ago, and as he lay thinking it seemed to him he heard a voice say, "Help yourself to God." At first he was almost shocked. It seemed irreverent, and yet the words repeated themselves over and over again, "Help yourself to God, help yourself to God, help yourself." Gradually a sense of peace and joy filled his heart, and he realized as never before how near God is, how he stands at our very side, waiting to give us abundantly of his Spirit, his love, and his help—we have only to help ourselves. That evening he preached in a New York church, and told this experience of his. Afterward he learned that a lady in the congregation had come to New York to undergo a severe surgical operation. She had come into the church feeling greatly burdened with anxiety and shrinking from the ordeal before her. Dr. Adams' words seemed like a message from God to her, and she said her last conscious thought as she lay on the operating table was that God was beside her with help and strength sufficient for all her needs—she had only to take all she wanted. She had caught a glimpse of the heavenly resources offered for her use and had simply taken God at his word and availed herself of them. And so may we.

How God Helped Him (538).

Recently I met a man who was an active and efficient Christian worker. During our conversation he gave me a bit of his past life. "When I was a young man," he said, "I fell into bad company, and went from bad to worse. I got into debt, and my creditors began to press me. Then I had an opportunity to steal a large sum of money, with little chance of detection. On the morning of the day I'd set to take the money, I found a little card on my desk, placed there I know not how, which read, 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.' That little card troubled me all day, and I did not take the money. I became convinced that, however that card might have come to my desk, Christ had sent it to save me; and from that day to this I have worked for his cause."—Sunday School Times.

God's Protecting Guidance (539).

And what is the goal toward which this Divine Governor is leading men? The story of the Lord shall go before thee, the mercy of God shall be thy reward. Daily thou shalt hear his voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The Lord shall guide thee continually and

with this result, "thou shalt be like unto a watered garden, like unto a spring whose gushing waters fail not." In his certainty of victory Isaiah sweeps all the world for similes beautiful enough to describe the good fortune of the man who is guided by God. "God shall go before thee." When the Prince and Princess of Wales went out to the Durbar in India, messengers went on in advance, safeguarding the Suez Canal, fitting up the ship with comforts in India, putting in ice plants to cool the heated air, making the parks in Delhi to seem like an Eden garden for beauty and delight. And God doth send his messengers before your face to prepare the way for your life, because you are dear unto him. "The glory of God shall encamp unto thy rearward." In the retreat of the Ten Thousand, Xenophon tells us that the rearward was the danger point of attack. All day the young Greeks marched out of the enemies' country, and when the night fell, the farmers would come in to attack the rear where the sick, the tired and the crippled were slowly toiling forward. Not the head of the company suffered. At last the Greek general took his bravest, freshest and noblest youths and equipped them with double arms and caused them to encamp upon the rearward, and so brought them in safety to the homeland and the sight of the sea. "And thy life shall be as a fountain of waters." The fountain meant to the people of that ancient time the place of cleansing and the renewal of life itself. In the English gallery is a canvas called the "Waters of Lethe." When these pilgrims come to the edge of the river, they are grizzled, worn, aged, crippled and in rags, and down into the life-giving waters they plunge. But on the other side of the river stand a group in bright array. All are young, beautiful, radiant, and with songs and outbreaking joy they go across the grass of Eden. What has wrought this transformation? These radiant ones have passed through the waters of cleansing and the renewal of life. God hath guided them, hath at last redeemed them, into his own likeness.—Hillis.

LXX. THE DYNAMICS OF THE GOSPEL.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Romans 1:16.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. R. L. Stevenson cited this instance of the Gospel's transforming power from his pastoral experience:

Thirty years ago when I became pastor of a church in Western New York, one man in the congregation impressed me particularly whenever I met him or saw him in his place in the sanctuary. He was a tall man, with a massive head, covered with heavy hair hardly iron gray; neither voice nor manner indicating any weakness, though he was within two years of his fourscore and ten. I found that he had been for more than fifty years a member of that church, and was one that was looked upon in the community as a leader in the ways of godliness. He died during the next year after an illness of several weeks, during which he gave many illustrations of the power and beauty of a Christian character developed by long experience.

Soon after I became acquainted with him, he gave me an account of his coming to the hope and life of a Christian.

He was thirty-two years old, and considered himself settled in his views of duty, his moral habits and his standing among his fellow men. He felt that this was all that was necessary. With his wife's brother, he had formed a partnership in wagon-making. The country was new, they had set up a shop in the woods, and close by, the two couples had built a double cabin for a temporary home. One day, he went from the shop to the house, and, not finding his wife, he stepped outside to enter the door of the other apartment. As he did so, he met his sister-in-law. She with her hands full of something she was carrying in from an outside fireplace, stood for a minute to say, "Have you ever thought of your sins?" Startled by a question so unexpected and under such circumstances, he asked the question, "What is sin?" Her reply was as prompt: "Sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God."

"I had learned the Catechism in old Connecticut," said he, "but it had gone into one ear and out at the other. But, in an instant, as she spoke these words, I found myself changed. I could not understand it, I have never understood it; but if ever I became a Christian, it seems to me to have been at that instant."

Soon after, he went before the church to offer himself for membership. He told his story. When he had finished, he was surprised to hear a man sitting behind him say to another, "I wish I had so good an experience as that to tell of." In his half delirious condition, during his last illness, he told me what an encouragement those words had been to him. He was for some time troubled with questions as to the genuineness of his hope, because of the incident which brought him to indulge it. But the man who had spoken thus of him was conspicuous for his godly life. So that, again and again, throughout the long years, he

was accustomed to say to himself, "If such a man as J. P. could speak in commendation of all I can tell of in my having come to a hope, I too, may speak of it with confidence."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Remarkable Witness (540).

In Philadelphia, a man came into an evangelistic service one evening wounded and bleeding. He was one of the roughest of the rough, who a few minutes before had been in a saloon fight and was so horribly beaten that he fled to the meeting house to save his life. He was one of those men who had lived his whole life, from his very babyhood, in rough and wicked associations. He had never in his life opened a Bible. And while in this place of refuge he listened to the truth, the Holy Spirit touched his heart, and in the agony of his conviction for sin he began to cry out in the anguish of his soul, "God have mercy upon me, a sinner!" That night the Saviour's pardoning love was manifested to him, and the peace of God turned his agony for sin into thanksgiving for forgiveness. He left the house a new man in Christ Jesus. And now comes that divine wonder of wonders that has been repeated so often. This man, restored to his right mind, and rejoicing in the pardoning grace of Christ, began at once to work for the Saviour. All his hatred toward the men who had beaten him was gone. And he went straight back to them to tell them of his new-found hope and joy. They listened in amazement, and sixteen of the roughest men in Philadelphia within a few weeks were through his instrumentality brought to Christ. No mere man could do that. It was the ever-living Son of God born anew in that man's heart.—Banks.

Conquered by Christ (541).

In a certain New England village a woman noted for her spiteful tongue became converted. People believed in the genuineness of that conversion when in one house after another she was found trying to undo the mischief she had created by her malicious gossip. She did not wait for neighbors to "nail a lie," or twit her with a piece of slander, but went round bravely taking back the untrue stories she had circulated. One of these neighbors bore emphatic witness to the power of such repentance:

"I haven't ever took much stock in merrycles, but for the last four, five weeks all New Harbor's been a-seeing one. It didn't affect me a particle to hear of her goin' forward and standin' up to be prayed for; but Sally Ann actually goin' around and eating humble pie where she's told crooked stories sort o' set folks thinking." That kind of repentance means something.—Pilgrim Teacher.

The Miracle of Recreated (542).

That great California scientist, Luther Burbank, takes a tree that has been going to the bad for some reason or other for hundreds of years, and at last has become altogether ugly and noxious, and by the shock of a new creation he breaks up all its old habits, turns its energies into fresh channels, and makes of it a lovely and fruitful thing. . . . And if your magician can work that miracle, and break up the habits of the tree, and make of it a new thing, beautiful and fruitful,

why should it be thought a thing incredible that God can break a man off from his past, and recreate him in the image of righteousness and true holiness?—W. L. Watkinson.

Jerry McAuley (543).

One of the most distinguished preachers in New York said, as he stood in a great pulpit and looked down upon the face of a man lying in his casket at the foot of the pulpit, "Of all men who have worked in our city, I think this man was almost the greatest. I pay a tribute to his memory. He has influenced the city profoundly in his mission." When he had finished his tribute, many came forward, and as they looked into the upturned face, it was with real emotion. Then the poor of New York came to see their friend, and they filed past for a considerable time, some of them bending over and bathing his face with their tears. Finally, there came a great number of men each with a white rose, which they placed on the casket until it was covered, and then the roses fell on the floor. It was a monument of flowers reared to the memory of a man who had served three terms in prison. He had been called in his earlier days a violent criminal. He had been profane and ignorant. He was seated one night in gloom and misery in an alley of a city when a missionary came along and handed him a little tract. The poor fellow tore it in pieces and said with an oath: "If you want to help me give me your coat. You must see that I am freezing." Then the missionary, who was himself thinly clad, took off his own coat and gave it to him. This act of kindness almost broke the man's heart. Jerry McAuley, who was then deep in iniquity and far from God, was wonderfully saved. Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him.—J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D.

How God Works In Character (544).

An artist was asked by a king to make him a man. A human figure was carved in marble, but was denounced as cold; painted on canvas, but condemned as lifeless; molded of wax, but derided as motionless. "Make me a man," cried the capricious monarch. Then the artist found a beggar, cleansed him, clothed him, and brought him to the king saying, "O king, I could not make a man myself, but here is one whom God made, and I found."

We feel that this artist wrought no wonder. But if he could have changed the beggar into a prince, the ignorant into a wise man, the degraded into a person of nobility—then he would have been a true creator. In this age of social enthusiasm, we sometimes fancy that if we could feed all the hungry, clothe all the naked, and make comfortable all the wretched, the troubles of the world would be at an end, and the need for serious attention to the morals of the race would cease. But if character remained unaltered, the result would be no marvel, and the misery of mankind would continue.

But suppose it were possible for us to change life itself, giving to men minds thoroughly furnished, wills which always chose the true, the good, and the beautiful, aspirations always centered upon righteousness—then we should work a miracle.

This is what God purposes to do for all who will submit to his task

ioning. He works in material more enduring than marble, more delicate than gold, more beautiful than ivory, more plastic than clay. He works in character and makes of it a product bearing the divine image and superscription. Paul says, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." When the Christian is completed, he is wonderful beyond comparison.—Selected.

The Master Musician (545).

Once upon a time, in an ancient church, there was a great organ on which the people had not yet learned to play. One after another tried the instrument, drew out its stops and wakened some of its harmonies; but none of them dreamed of the wonderful music which lay hidden there. Then one day came the Master, sat like other men before the organ, and began to play; and the people below hushed themselves and whispered: "Is this the organ which we have owned so long—this which first sighs and weeps, and then thrills with passion and joy?" From that day the hope of their worship was to reproduce the music which was then revealed, and when the best of them did his best, they asid: "This makes us think of the Master's playing." Just such an instrument is human life, with its complex mechanism, its possible discords, its hidden harmonies, and many a philosopher and teacher has drawn from within it some of the music which was there. Then one day comes the Master. He knows, as the Gospel says, what is in man, and bending over human life, reveals the music of it; and from that day forth, the hope of the world has been to reproduce the harmony; and when the best of men do their best, we say: "This makes us think of the Master's playing."—Professor Peabody.

The Power of God at Work (546).

At a crowded meeting held in a large New York church the superintendent of the Rescue Mission, a tall, fine-looking man, was asked to speak. He told of the growth of the Mission and of the work it tried to do, and then he closed with these words: "I was asked today as I came into this church, 'Have you ever seen a bad man become a good man?' Yes, my friends, I have. Sixteen years ago a man was leaning against a beer-barrel in a saloon in New York. His coat was in tatters. His shoes would hardly hold together. He had not a cent in his pocket or a friend in the world. He had broken his mother's heart, he had deserted his wife. No door was open to him—not even that of the hospital, for he was not sick; nor that of the morgue, for he was not dead.

"Some one in the saloon said to him: 'You'd better go up to Forty-third street. There's a mission up there that you might work for a night's lodging.' The man went, and reeled into the mission half drunk. Before he went out again, twenty-four hours later, he had got hold of a hand that helped him to his feet. He had heard words of hope—of Him who came to seek not the righteous, but sinners. He had taken new heart, and begun a new upward climb. All that was sixteen years ago. Some of you know that man today. All of you have heard him speak."

Then as the superintendent sat down the great audience realized that they had been told the result of Christ's forgiving power in the life of that superintendent himself, Samuel H. Hadley.

LXXI. GRACE.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans 5:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. W. J. Blaikie commented on this theme as follows:

How unlike the usual ways of subduing rebels was that taken by God! Daring insurrections against law and order commonly meet with tremendous retribution among men. "Clemency," we are told, "would be misplaced kindness; severity is kindness in the end. Show no mercy to old or young till you have stamped out the last ember of rebellion."

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

Did ever messenger from an offended king cause his advent among rebels to be proclaimed with songs of "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will to men?"

What a gift God gave to the world when he gave his Son! What store of heaven's light and love and joy, of all that heals our disorders, brightens our life, sweetens the breath of society, mitigates the gloomy suffering and death and throws brightness on the eternal future, came into our world with him! O blind foolish world, that will not receive the gift, and like the poor worldings of Gadara, entreats God's Son to depart out of its coasts!

* * *

In preaching on this text Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren unfolded it along the following lines:

What Proves God's Love?

I. It is a strange thing that the love of God needs to be either proved or pressed upon men. 1. There never was, there is not, any religion untouched by Christianity that has any firm grip of the truth "God is love." 2. Even among ourselves and other people that have drunk in some form of Christianity with their mother's milk, it is the hardest possible thing even for men who do accept that gospel in their hearts to keep themselves up to the level of that great truth.

II. Notice the one fact which performs the double office of demonstrating and commending to us the love of God: "In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ's death is a death, not for an age, but for all time; not for this, that, or the other man, not for a section of the race, but for the whole of us, in all generations. The power of that death, as the sweep of that love, extends over all humanity, and holds forth benefits to every man of woman born.

III. Look at the force of this proof. Has it ever struck you that the words of the text, upon every hypothesis but one, are a most singular paradox? "God commended his love to us, in that Christ died for us." Is that not strange? What is the connection between God's love and Christ's death? Is it not obvious that we must conceive the

relation between God and Christ to be singularly close in order that Christ's death should prove God's love? The man who said that God's love was proved by Christ's propitiatory death believed that the heart of Christ was the revelation of the heart of God, and that what Christ did God did in his well-beloved Son.

IV. Consider what is thus proved and pressed upon us by the Cross. 1. The Cross of Jesus Christ speaks to all the world of a love which is not drawn forth by any merit or goodness in us. 2. The Cross of Christ preaches to us a love that has no cause, motive, reason, or origin, except himself. 3. The Cross preaches to us a love which shrinks from no sacrifice. 4. The Cross proves to us and presses upon us a love which wants nothing but our love, which hungers for the return of our love and our thankfulness.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

To Save Sinners (547).

A very striking method is now successfully employed for raising the cargoes of sunken vessels. A huge electro-magnet, operated from the deck of the vessel, is lowered to the submerged cargo, and if it be of a character subject to the influence of magnetism, it is attracted and lifted by this power, and thus easily saved. There is a power from on high which came to seek and save that which was lost. Down in the murky depths of the waters of sin this magnet of love draws to itself sinful souls, and lifts them by its power to the bright sunlight and pure air above.—The S. S. Chronicle.

While We Were Yet Sinners (548).

Some years ago, the Prince of Wales came to America, and there was great excitement about this Crown Prince coming to our country. The papers took it up and began to discuss it, and a great many were wondering what he came for. Was it to look into the republican government? Was it for his health? Was it to see our institutions? or for this, or for that? He came, and went, but he never told us what he came for. But when the Prince of Heaven came down into this world, he told us what he came for. God sent him, and he came to do the will of his Father. What was that? "To seek and to save that which was lost." And you cannot find any place in Scripture where a man was ever sent by God to do a work in which he failed. God sent Moses to Egypt to bring three millions of bondmen up out of the house of bondage into the promised land. Did he fail? It looked, at first, as if he were going to. If we had been in the Court when Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is God, that I should obey Him?" and ordered him out of his presence, we might have thought it meant failure. But did it? God sent Elijah to stand before Ahab, and it was a bold thing when he told him there should be neither dew nor rain; but didn't he lock up the heavens for three years and six months? Now here is God sending his own beloved Son from his bosom, from the throne, down into this world. Do you think he is going to fail? Thanks be to God, he can save to the uttermost, and there is not a man in this city who may not find it so, if he is willing to be saved.—Moody.

The Central Truth (550).

Sit down in front of Jesus Christ, and take your time; and, as you look, you will learn that which no hasty glance, no couple of minutes in the morning before you go to work, no still more abbreviated and drowsy moments at night before you go to sleep, will ever reveal to you. You must "summer and winter" with him "Ere that to you he will seem worthy of your love."

Christianity is doing no more than your shop, your business, your profession, or than your studies, your pursuits, your recreation even, demand, when it demands the exclusion of much in order that you may truly hold it.

Astronomers put what they call diaphragms into their telescopes, which narrow the field of vision. What for? In order to secure a sharper definition. And we have to do the same thing, to shut off a great deal, to do as a man does that is looking at the white gleam, for instance, away yonder, questionable on the horizon, which may be the foam of a billow, or a gull's wing, or the ship that he is expecting. He puts his hand to his brows, in order to shut out everything else, and fixes his gaze.

That is what we have to do. Look off, if you would look on. Look away from the intrusive and vulgar brilliancy of "the things that are seen and temporal." You will never see the stars in a street blazing with electric lamps; and you will never see Christ as you ought to see him, if your thoughts are full of the world.—Maclaren.

Christ and the Poets (551).

Of the vanity of things human and of the supremacy of the things of Christ, Tennyson sings:

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee;
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Of the triumph of Christ over the blindness of men Whittier beautifully writes:

"The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch its garment fold,
And feel the heavenly alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold."

Harriet Beecher Stowe put into fitting words the calm, sweet peace that dwells in a soul rooted and grounded in Christ amid all the outward storms that assail it:

"Far, far away the roar of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee!"

The great Shakespeare in speaking of Palestine says:

"In those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

D. M. Mulock sings:

"God rest you little children; but nothing you affright;
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night.
Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay,
When Jesus, the child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas day."

Salvation for Sinners (552).

Jesus has a message for the sinner; it is the message of forgiveness and restoration and a Father's love. There is no sinner for whom he has not his word of comfort to speak. Let none say he is so low or base or vile as to be beyond the comfort of the Gospel of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "From all sin!" The heaviest load of sin rolls off the heart at the foot of Christ's Cross. The despairing publican, smiting upon his breast and crying "God be merciful," becomes transfigured, as he listens to the words of Christ, into a rejoicing saint.—Rev. J. D. Jones.

Christ Our Salvation (553).

A poor shoemaker in his dreary little shop in a great city one day found by accident that there was one little place in his dark room from which he could get a view, through a window, of green fields, blue skies, and far-away hills. He wisely set his bench at that point, so that at any moment he could lift his eyes from his dull work and have a glimpse of the great, beautiful world outside. From the darkest sick room and from the midst of the keenest sufferings there is always a point from which we can see the face of Christ and have a glimpse of the glory of heaven. If only we will find this place and get this vision.—Selected.

God's Unspeakable Gift (554).

I do not know how to illustrate the incarnation. The only thing I ever thought of is very imperfect. You know how the coast line of the ocean runs from Maine to Cape Cod. Outside is the great ocean. What is inside those little curves? The ocean, of course. You call one the ocean, and the other the harbor or the bay, but it is all one ocean. The water is the same; it tastes the same, looks the same. Here is the great eternal God, filling all space, only in one place he flows into a little curve, Jesus of Nazareth, but it is the same God, whether he is there in heaven, or here in Jesus. Oh! I hope you don't understand this! It would be such a little thing if you and I understood it!—Alexander McKenzie.

LXXII. HEAVEN AS AN INCENTIVE.

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Romans 8:18.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Frederick W. Shannon, D.D., used the following peroration in a sermon on this theme:

With Paul, then, let us be of good courage. Now all these things maybe cannot be fully told in "matter molded forms." But we do know this: We are condensed mysteries—luminous personalities flashing forth the suppressed brilliance of Deity—whose expanding life will break out in ever new and heavenly beauties to harmonize with all the golden splendor which is yet to be revealed in God's boundless universe. Why, if I refuse to believe in the heaven life on account of its present mysteries to me, I should not take another step, nor utter another word, nor sleep another night, for these ordinary things, upon reflection, are profound mysteries, and are possible only after God had worked upon this earth for numberless ages. As the glory of dawn streamed into the room, a little girl with golden hair and cherry-red cheeks, stood pouring water from a glass down upon a begonia. After watering the plant she said: "Now I'll put it in the sun." What a chain of mysteries—a glass of water, a pot of dirt, a blooming plant, a shining sun, a radiant child! Suppose I had begun talking to her about the chemistry of nature. With beaming face, I think she would have answered: "But I'm going to put this pretty flower in the sun." Suppose I had repeated to her the scientist's statement of the elements of water, still I think she would have replied: "I'm going to put this flower in the sun." And if you ask me how can these heavenly things be I reply: See how a little water, a few spoonfuls of dirt and a genial sun, all working together upon a little dead seed, can woo and win it into the breathful sweetness and stainless vermilion of a flower. But better than any analogy in the heavens or upon the earth are the spirit rythmed words of Him to whom the universe hath yielded up all its riddles: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." Thus will we sing Frederick Lawrence Knowles' song of our old house and the new:

This body is my house—it is not I;
Herein I sojourn till, in some far sky,
I lease a fairer dwelling, built to last
Till all the carpentry of time is past.
When from my high place viewing this lone star,
What shall I care where these poor timbers are?
What though the crumbling walls turn dust and loam—
I shall have left them for a larger home!
What though the rafters break, the stanchions rot,
When earth has dwindled to a glimmering spot!
When thou, clay cottage, fallest, I'll immerse

My long-cramped spirit in the universe.
Through uncomputed silences of space
I shall yearn upward to the leaning Face,
The ancient heavens will roll aside for me,
As Moses monarch'd the dividing sea.
This body is my house—it is not I;
Triumphant in this faith I live, and die.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Samuel L. Campbell concluded a sermon on this subject as follows:

I used to be much afraid of a thunderstorm; indeed, the feeling was common to the children of our neighborhood; and with reason, for what would in these later days be called a cyclone one day swept across the green valleys where we lived, tearing up the orchards and unroofing the house, the track of which can be seen to this day. So sometimes as we sat in school, of a summer afternoon, and the air began to grow dark with coming clouds, we would all be seized with a kind of nervous terror; then, when the tempest burst, the wind roared, the rain poured, the hail rattled against the windowpane, and those awful peals of thunder shook the ground, all the school exercises would be suspended, and it was sometimes as much as the teacher could do to keep us from crying out in very terror. It will always remain upon our minds, I think, the memory of those thunderstorms. But as I now think of them, they were always of brief duration, and, about the time school was out, would clear away. How we used to shout then, we who had lately been so frightened and so still; and, as we rushed from the door, we would call one to another, and say, "Where's the thunderstorm?"—"Where's the thunderstorm?" And just opposite the schoolhouse there was a great hill which gave a fine echo, and so the call would come back to us, "Where's the thunderstorm?" And to the call we always got an answer; for the grass that carpeted the pasture-ground that spread close around us looked up and said, "Part of it is in me," and the lilac or the sweet-brier that grew by our old-fashioned house door nodded its head and shook off the raindrops and sent up a fresh fragrance as it said, "Part of it is in me;" and the warm pools of water by the roadside through which we splashed with our bare feet, and the brook that had been set singing among the green pines on the hillside said, "Part of it is in me." But, grandest of all, that brilliant rainbow setting its feet at the river brink, and arching its head up along the hillside, up beyond the hilltop, up across the retreating cloud, up into the clear sky and shining there as with all transfiguration glory, answered: "Part of that black and terrible thunderstorm is in me."

This, my brethren, if we will only have it so, is what becomes of all those terrors that sometimes so alarm us; they but make our grass green and bring forth the fruits and flowers of paradise; for a moment they gloom our atmosphere and desolate the scene, but, as they pass, they set a rainbow in our sky that joins heaven and earth together.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

"The Glory Revealed to Usward" (555).

I have read of an old sculptor who had among other pieces of work

in his workshop the model of a beautiful cathedral. It was covered with the dust of years, and nobody admired it, although it was an exact model inside and out, of a fine cathedral. One day the old attendant placed a light inside the model, and its gleam shone through the beautiful stained glass windows. Then all stopped to admire its beauty. The change that was wrought by the light within was marvelous. Many of the righteous are hidden in obscurity today. None so poor as to do them reverence. But when the Lord comes the light within will blaze out, and they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then the beauty of the Lord will be seen upon them, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed through them.—Talking Sunbeams.

The Secret of Happiness Amid Trials (556).

Meeting one of the saints upon the street the salutation was, "How are you?" He answered, "I have a headache and toothache and backache, but I am happy in the Lord." Why not? A man ought to rejoice evermore, if he is at peace with his God. A holy life ought to be a happy life in all kinds of weather and in every possible condition and environment. Boswell says that Samuel Johnson would not allow anyone to say that he or anyone else was happy. "It is all cant," he would say. "The dog knows that he is miserable all the time." Johnson had a friend who once told him that his wife's sister was a really happy woman, and the lady herself being present, he asked her if that were not true. She declared with great emphasis that it was, and that she was happy all the time. Then Samuel Johnson, the savage creature that he sometimes was, made reply, "If your sister-in-law is really the contented being she professes herself, sir, her life gives the lie to every research of humanity; for she is happy without health, without beauty, without money, and without understanding." Then he went away growling and said to his friend, "I tell you the woman is ugly and sickly and foolish and poor; and would it not make a man hang himself to hear such a creature say she was happy?" Did Samuel Johnson think that happiness must depend upon health, wealth, beauty and knowledge? Would he assert that a sick man or a poor man or an ignorant man or an ugly man could never be a happy one? The poor and sick and humble saints know better. They know how to rejoice in the Lord even in the midst of human mishaps and miseries. They have found the Christian's secret of a happy life in a heart that is filled with love to God and is set to do his will.—Northwestern Christian Advocate.

The Glory (557).

I once saw the dear daughter of a Christian family dying. She was a beautiful Christian and had for years been active in Christian work, but her sickness was of such a nature as to induce despondency, and at last she gave up hope; for weeks before her death her countenance had been inexpressibly sad, and the shadow only deepened as the end drew near. I stood at her bedside when she passed away; sight had failed her; hearing had failed her; speech had failed her; and still that sad, sad look remained; when suddenly, as if an angel's wing had swept over it, her countenance changed. I stepped to an adjoining room and called some friends and said, "Come quickly, you must all see this," and

they all saw it; that expression of perfect peace with which she passed away. That was her last expression, and it remained there when we closed the casket to carry her to her rest.—Campbell.

Sustained by Hope's Vision (558).

Not long ago there lived an old bed-ridden saint, and a Christian lady who visited her found her always very cheerful. This visitor had a lady friend of wealth who constantly looked on the dark side of things, and was always cast down although she was a professed Christian. She thought it would do this lady good to see the bed-ridden saint, so she took her down to the house. She lived up in the garret, five stories up, and when they had got to the first story the lady drew up her dress and said, "How dark and filthy it is!" "It's better higher up," said her friend. They got to the next story, and it was no better; the lady complained again, but her friend replied, "It's better higher up." At the third floor it seemed still worse, and the lady kept complaining, but her friend kept saying, "It's better higher up." At last they got to the fifth story, and when they went into the sick-room, there was a nice carpet on the floor, there were flowering plants in the window, and little birds singing. And there they found this bed-ridden saint—one of those saints whom God is polishing for his own temple—just beaming with joy. The lady said to her, "It must be very hard for you to lie here." She smiled, and said, "It's better higher up." Yes! And if things go against us, my friends, let us remember that "it's better higher up."—Selected.

The Waiting Inheritance (559).

We say of a minor he has so much property. Buried in those Equitable vaults across the river yonder are a billion dollars in negotiable securities. Ryan has $100,000,000, the Harriman estate has $125,000,000, Belmont & Co. have $150,000,000, and so on. Now, there are heirs to these estates who are yet under twenty-one years of age. But their minorship does not nullify their ownership. The estate is ready and waiting for them, and when they cross the threshold of manhood and womanhood their wealth will be given to them. In some such way, Paul thinks of the waiting immediacy of our new house. Before the last pulsebeat had died into stillness, before the headman's ax had wholly cleaved his head from his body, even while his last breath was drying upon his motionless lips, Paul the magnificent, Paul the Christian gladiator, Paul the world-thinker and world-doer, Paul the Christian-winged immortal had already moved into his new home, a millionfold more splendid than Nero's Golden House; and he began at once, I have no doubt, to help God and Christ and men and angels shine up heaven for you and me.—Shannon.

The Nearness of the Glory-World (560).

In the midst of all our talk of politics, our plans for the spring business or travel, and our aspirations for the future, some 1,600 of us who were foremost in all these plans and hopes have been, in a flash, pulled down on the Titanic into the depths of the ocean out of sight forever. Their plans, their hopes, their social prestige, their wealth, their political ambitions and all their combined worth, personal and financial,

counted for no more than if they were so many rats in the ship. There is a totally different perspective for life from that which we usually have. Which is the fundamentally right view of the life we are living and of the mysteries which are all about us? This crash of the Titanic against the iceberg threw wide open the door between the seen and the unseen and laid bare to the eyes of everyone of us who has the sense to look at the solemn truth, the fact that the every day living of most of us takes no account of the most vital, the most fundamental and omnipresent facts surrounding every one of us.—The Fitchburg Sentinel.

When the Mists Have Rolled Away (561).

When a boy, my father used to take me on his knee and tell me stories of a land of brave men and fair women. When I grew older I read for myself in the pages of the greatest romances of all literature stories of fair women and brave men—in my father's land. I had a great desire to see my father's land. One day in after years the opportunity came. I traveled over the sea, but one night there came a great wind. The sea was tempestuous and I am a poor sailor. For three nights and three days we strove with the seas toward the shore of my father's land. The morning of the fourth day we were in the Irish Sea, and at last it was still. Toward evening I crept on deck and said to the captain, "Are we almost there?" And he replied, encouragingly: "We will get in in the morning." Early in the morning I asked again if we were "almost there." And the captain replied: "In sound of shore, but not in sight." And actually I could hear sounds off the shore I could not see. After what seemed a long, long time, I said again: "Captain, are we almost in?" "Why, man," he said, "we are in, as you will see when the mists lift," and sure enough a wind swept down the Firth and drove the mists far out to sea, and there we were in the Firth of the Clyde, while far away on every side stretched the green shores of Auld Scotia, my father's land—the land I had traveled so far to see.

Some day—I know not when—I shall be on another sea. Another captain shall be my friend. And if, weary at the last, I go to him, he shall say in answer to the question: "Am I almost there?" "When the morning cometh." And, if again, I cry for the shore he will say: "When the mists have rolled away," and then some day the mists shall all be rolled away, and around shall stretch on every side from eternity's shores the evergreen hills o' the Land o' the Leal—my Father's land, your Father's land, our Father's land.—Rev. R. S. Inglis, D.D.

LXXIII. CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST.

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—Romans 8:37.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. John Y. Ewart, D.D., says: It is marvelous how nearly omnipotent man can be with God's help. We are gradually finding out the secrets of nature and harnessing mighty natural forces into our service. We are also finding out the secrets that have been lying hidden in God's grace for millenniums and that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. The steam engine, the steamboat, the telegraph, the telephone and other great inventions are the trophies of man's triumph over nature, the partners of his power when linked with nature. Nature works through man in these stirring modern days to accomplish hitherto undreamed of results. But the triumphs of divine grace when working through men and women "meet for the Master's use" are exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.

Think of what God does in enabling a man to resist temptation. Some evil habit floors a man and makes a brute of him. But one happy day he sees his own weak, sinful, degraded self and sees also the gracious, all-powerful, all-loving Christ. He gives Christ the reins and that bad habit is distanced forever.

Think of what God does in changing a man who is worldly, selfish, godless. A complete transformation results. This man becomes penitent, humble, prayerful, willing to learn and to serve. The only explanation is the presence of divine grace in his heart.

Think of what God does in sustaining a soul called to go through deep sorrow. How calm and resigned she is, how patient and brave! It is because she is conscious of the infinite help of him who says that in all our affliction he is afflicted. Think of what God can do in reviving a half-dead church.

* * *

Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D., said: In all these things we are more than conquerors.

I. To be more than conquerors is to be triumphant conquerors, not merely getting through the battle or the trouble, but coming out of it with rejoicing, with song and gladness. Not only may we be conquerors, but if we are Christians we must be conquerors. We dare not yield. We know that the evil in us and the evil around us should not be allowed to overcome us; that appetites and base passions and bad tempers should not be permitted to rule us.

II. But do not forget the closing words of St. Paul's statement: "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." The text would not be true if these last five words were left off. We cannot leave Christ out of life and ever in anything be true overcomers. The Roman Emperor saw the symbol of the cross blazing in the sky and over it the legend: "By this shalt thou conquer." Before every young soldier of the cross, as he goes out to begin life's battles,

shines the same symbol, with the same legend. "By this shalt thou conquer." "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." It is only through Christ that any of us can overcome sin or sorrow or trial.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Victorious Through Christ (562).

He was a man who had once been picked from the gutter. The first time I called upon him I noticed his name on a brass doorplate, and beneath it a date. I asked him the meaning of the date on his doorplate. He replied: "That is my birthday." But as he was a comparatively old man and the date a comparatively recent one, I was perplexed, until he came to my relief, saying: "That is the day on which I was born again. I put it on my doorplate, for I want no one who enters my home to remember anything about me before that day. I do not want God in heaven to remember anything about me before that day, and he has promised that he will not, that he will forget and blot out all my transgressions. And," pointing to his wife, "I do not want that good woman to remember me back of that day. Before that day she never had a happy day with me; since that day she has never had an unhappy one. Have you, mother?" And if you could have seen the proud and tender look upon her face as she replied, "No, William," you would have realized the genuineness of his conversion. I asked my Christian friend one day as he lay on his deathbed, a bed of intense suffering, what he thought this verse meant, "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in him," giving it the revised rendering, so if there were any difference he would detect it. I will never forget the almost seraphic smile that swept the signs of suffering from his face for a moment as he said, placing his hand over his heart: "Oh, it just means that I have the witness in here that I am a child of God." And I recalled the word of Paul to the Romans in Chapter 8 and verse 16: "The spirit of God beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."—R. S. Inglis, D.D.

The All Sufficient One (563).

"Can I do anything for you?" said an officer on the battlefield to a wounded soldier. "Nothing, thank you." "Shall I bring you some water?" "No; I am dying; but there is one favor you can do for me. In my knapsack there you will find a New Testament. Please open it to the fourteenth chapter of John and read that verse that begins, 'Peace I leave with you.'" The officer opened the book and read, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Thank you," said the dying man: "I have that peace; I am going to the Saviour; I want nothing more."—Theodore L. Cuyler.

Grace Sufficient (564).

The other evening I was riding home after a heavy day's work. I felt weary and sore depressed, when swiftly, suddenly, as a lightning flash, came: "My grace is sufficient for thee." And I said: "I should think it is, Lord," and burst out laughing. I never fully understood

what the holy laughter of Abraham was until then. It seemed to make unbelief so absurd.

It was as if some little fish, being very thirsty, was troubled about drinking the river dry; and Father Thames said: "Drink away, little fish, my stream is sufficient for thee." Or it seemed like a little mouse in the granaries of Egypt after seven years of plenty, fearing it might die of famine, and Joseph might say: "Cheer up, little mouse, my granaries are sufficient for thee." Again, I imagined a man away up yonder on the mountain saying to himself: "I fear I shall exhaust all the oxygen in the atmosphere. But the earth might say: 'Breathe away, O man, and fill thy lungs ever; my atmosphere is sufficient for thee.'"

O brethren, be great believers! Little faith will bring your souls to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to you.—C. H. Spurgeon.

"He Breaks the Power of Sin" (565).

This liberty is not a mere fiction, printed on paper or proclaimed from the pulpit. Does the slave who once toiled in the cotton field for his master under an overseer know that he is free when he goes forth to raise and harvest cotton for himself in his own field? Does the prisoner who endured years of imprisonment in a dark and foul dungeon know that he is free when he is led forth through his prison doors into the pure air of liberty under the open sky, and permitted to go where he will? Inner bondage is as real as outer bondage. It is more painful Inner liberty is as real and as sweet as outer liberty. Spiritual freedom is better than physical freedom. Free from the condemnation of sin, free from the dominion of sin; free from the tyranny of sinful habits; free from sinful desires and affections. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

"He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me."

—The Christian Advocate.

Our Omnipotent Defender (566).

In the great struggle which is ever being waged between right and wrong, truth and error, we are constantly in danger of leaving the mightiest factor on the side of right and truth out of the reckoning.

We forget that right has an omnipotent Defender. We forget that wrong has an omnipotent Antagonist.

We may not understand just why the final victory is deferred; but we know that it is sure. And it is because we lay so much stress upon our own meager contribution to that final result, and fail to reckon on what the Great Antagonist has promised and is amply able to do, that we often tremble for the outcome.

Why Worry (567).

What a vast portion of our lives is spent in anxious and useless forebodings concerning the future! Present joys, present blessings slip by, and we miss half their sweet flavor, and all for the want of faith in him who provides for the tiniest insect in the sunbeam. Oh, when shall we

learn the sweet trust in God our little children teach us every day by their confiding faith in us? We, who are so mutable, so faulty, so irritable, so unjust, and he who is so watchful, so pitiful, so loving, so forgiving! Why can not we, slipping our hand into his each day, walk trustingly over that day's appointed path, thorny or flowery, crooked or straight, knowing that evening will bring us sleep, peace and home?—Selected.

A Glorious Fact (568).

A young Scotch clergyman was visiting an old lady who knew her Bible pretty well. I suppose he thought it was his duty to leave a text with her; so he said, before he left the room, "What a lovely promise that is, 'Lo, I am with you alway!'" She replied, "Hoot, mon, it's no a promise; it's just a fact!" It is not merely a promise, it is just the declaration of a glorious fact. It is the "I Am," whose presence is such an inspiring certainty.—Dr. Guinness.

Our Safety (569).

Like Alpine climbers, our only safety is in steadfastly fixing our gaze on him, our Guide, and following step by step the path he trod that he might know all the dangers and difficulties that beset our way. And we may be sure he will never lead us further or faster than we can safely follow.—Rose Porter.

Strong in His Strength (570).

But Paul said "I." "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He recognized the fact that he had an important part to perform in all God's work for lost men. "I am debtor," he said, "to the Greeks and the barbarians." His conscience is loaded with a sense of obligation to all for whom his Saviour died. And such was his great willingness to throw himself and all his splendid powers into the breach that he said upon another occasion: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Every church member should rouse himself to a sense of responsibility for the real success of the church to which he belongs. And he should be willing to make sacrifices for the Church which Christ has purchased with his own blood. To evade this responsibility or shift it to other shoulders is cowardly and disloyal. Men and women are the wires which God charges with the electricity of his saving grace. Through consecrated flesh and blood that saving grace is to find its way into the hearts of the wayward and the lost. We ought to consider it a distinguished honor to be co-laborers with God and should purge ourselves of everything that makes us non-conductors of the divine electric stream. —Ewart.

LXXIV. UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Romans 12:1, 2.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In a sermon on this theme Rev. Dr. Selby said: A consistent resistance to worldly rules and methods of life is the logical issue of a believer's consecration. It is binding upon all who present themselves as living sacrifices to God upon the altar of service, to show that they are superior to the shaping pressures and movements of an unbelieving age. The idea of separation from the world is indissolubly paired with that of self-dedication to holy uses. Of course these old similitudes of the altar and the sacrifice have to be translated into the terms of a spiritual dispensation. Separation does not mean a change of place for the body, but a new attitude of mind, the turning towards new objects. The life presented as a tribute of worship in the temple loses its place in field or stall, and can no longer be bought and sold in the market. Its dedication in the one sphere implies its final removal from the other. The frequenter of idol shrines assumes that the victim has a double, in virtue of which the finer essence of its life can be presented to the spirits, whilst the flesh remains at the service of its earthly owner. Some Christians might be under the influence of the same idea. They act as if they had a duplicate life, one side of which can be surrendered to God, whilst the other is reserved to do the bidding of the world. It is true the veil is rent, and the secular has been made sacred by the great redemptive crisis; but the altar for the whole burnt-offering, which was an emblem of the consecrated life of God's people, has its counterpart in the unseen sanctuary, and still demands the undivided devotion of a life. If you are servile to the will of the world, and it still drags you captive in its train, the sanctifying altar of the spiritual temple cannot touch you with its efficacies. Fashion your habits and activities to meet the whims and caprices of the passing hour, and the altar will surely reject the poor figment of your dedication, as the riven altar at Bethel spewed forth the sacrifice placed upon it.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Giving Up to God (571).

The author of that remarkable book, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," reminds us of the old story of a man who, on a dark night and along an unknown way, found himself slipping down what he concluded was a precipice. He caught hold of a branch that arrested his fall, and clinging to it remained for a long time in agony; but finally, and with a despairing farewell of life, he relaxed his hold and fell—six inches! Had he given up earlier, much of that terrible experience would have been spared him. It is an old story, and preachers have used it,

and wisely used it to say that, as the mother-earth—so close to this man's feet, had he known it—received him, so will the Everlasting Arms receive us if we fall absolutely into them, and give up relying on our personal strength, as if that were our only safeguard and avail.—Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, D.D.

Livingstone's Vow (572).

I will place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything will advance the interests of that kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping of it I shall most promote the glory of him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and eternity. May grace be given me to adhere to this.—David Livingstone, in his Journal, May 22, 1853.

How to Enjoy Religion (573). A preacher, approaching his new appointment, asked a boy: "Do people at Millbrook enjoy religion?" "Them that has it does," was the reply.—Bishop C. H. Fowler.

Whole-Hearted Religion (574).

An ancient legend tells of a maiden that was sent to Alexander from some conquered province. She was very beautiful, but the most remarkable thing about her was her breath, which was like the perfume of richest flowers. It was soon discovered, however, that she had lived all her life amid poison, breathing it, and that her body was full of poison. Flowers given to her withered on her breast. Insects on which she breathed perished. A beautiful bird was brought into her room and fell dead. Fanciful as this story is, there are lives which in a moral sense are just like this maiden. They have become so corrupt that everything they touch receives harm. Nothing beautiful can live in their presence. On the other hand, the Christian life is one whose warm atmosphere is a perpetual benediction. It is like the shadow of Peter, having healing power, so that all on whom it falls are enriched by it.

There were two artists, close friends, one of whom excelled in landscape painting, and the other in depicting the human figure. The former had painted a picture in which wood and rock and sky were combined in the artist's best manner. But the picture remained unsold—no one cared to buy it. It lacked something. The artist's friend came and said, "Let me take your painting." A few days later he brought it back. He had added a lovely human figure to the matchless landscape. Soon the picture was sold.

There are some people whose religion seems to have a similar lack. It is very beautiful, faultless in its creed and its worship, but it lacks the human element. It is only landscape, and it needs life to make it complete. No religion is realizing its true mission unless it touches life at its every point.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

Things That Will Not Blend (575).

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," said the Master; yet how cunningly and persistently we attempt the impossible! In curious ways we seek to combine the spiritual and the carnal, the consecrated and the profane, the divine and the worldly.

Chemists are continually discovering the possibility of blending sub-

stances once thought incompatible; but the Christian spirit, and the spirit of the world, are infinitely disparate, and can never be reconciled.

How much easier and happier is the Christian life when once we have effected a complete severance from the world! Henry Drummond says truly, "The most of the difficulties of trying to live the Christian life arise from attempting to half live it." To be an out and out disciple is to enjoy peace and strength which to the double-hearted are entirely strange.—Watkinson.

How the Body Registers Soul Conditions (576).

"Be ye transformed," says the Apostle, "by the renewing of your mind." The outer life will change itself according to the changes of the spirit. The very face will become more and more a copy and index of the mind and heart; and all that is outward will slowly assume a certain shining, corresponding to the shining beauty of the thoughts within.

For is it not very true in everyday life that the outward man, if carefully observed, is a sure index of the soul? Sometimes you know what a man is by one glance at him; and if we had a quicker perception we should always know. The facial lines are as a book in which the keen eyes would read all manner of hidden secrets. The miser has a peculiar type of face, hard, narrow, shriveled like his own soul. The gambler cannot hide his vice; it is written on every feature. The sensualist betrays his guilty secret by the very motions of his lips and eyes. Passions and hatreds and lusts, however skilfully buried, worm their way to the surface and crawl over the face, leaving their traces there. A fair woman loses all her beauty if the heart entertains a long time evil tempers and ugly thoughts. Not suddenly—sometimes it takes years to bring about the correspondence between the face and the heart, but sooner or later the correspondence is made complete. And the plainest face becomes in time beautiful to look upon, as if the Master had thrown his own shadow there, if the heart within has entertained divine thoughts a long time and held secret fellowship with the Lord of life.

What is true of the face is true of the speech, of the actions—nay, of the whole outer world. All things change as our spirits change. The very world is narrowed down to the measure of our narrowing souls, broadened as our hearts are enlarged, beautiful or ugly, healthy or diseased, as our hearts are shaped by God or the depraving forces around us. St. Paul goes to the root of the matter when he says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Rev. J. J. Greenough.

Unreserved Love (577).

When Cordelia is reproached by King Lear for not being as warm in her protestations of love for him as her sisters have been, she answers:

> "Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
> They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
> That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
> Half my love with him, half my care and duty."

Most of us have encountered a similar difficulty when we have come to the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." If he claims all, where is any to come in for our own flesh and blood? This difficulty disappears if we understand the meaning to be that we are

to love the Lord with as much heart as we are capable of: with affections trained to their utmost. Some day the record-breaking trotter of today will cover a mile with all the speed he is capable of; but he will have enabled himself to distance on that track all records, including his own, by the good work he has done on every other track. Let that serve as a parable for us. The heart, like every possession of ours, is capable of almost endless development. If it had at the outset the capacity of a teaspoon, we may erelong by diligence give it the capacity of an ocean-bed. Some day, we dare believe, we shall love God, with an ardor by contrast with which our love of today will seem pitiably small. —Rev. A. B. Austin, D.D.

Consecration and Concentration (578).

"Expulsive Power of New Affection." Chalmers' sermon on this theme was suggested by a stage-driver's remark. He whipped his leader just as he passed a big white stone, at which he always shied, to give him something to think of till he passed the stone. The secret of holiness is preoccupation with the things of God. A mind and heart filled with God make sin comparatively powerless.—Pierson.

LXXV. THE VISION OF THE HOME PREPARED.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."—1 Corinthians 2:9, 10.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Robert Francis Coyle, D.D., in presenting the claims of the other world upon this present life, said, by way of introduction: Quite recently the professor of divinity of the University of Cambridge put himself on record as follows: "Among all the changes which have come over religious and theological teaching within living memory, none seems to me so momentous as the acute secularizing of the Christian hope, as shown by the practical disappearance of the other world from the sermons and writings of those who are most in touch with the thoughts and aspirations of our contemporaries."

This tallies with my own observation. The present-day literature of Christianity—our religious magazines and papers and the deliverances of the pulpit—are singularly empty of the "other-worldly." The emphasis is upon the here and now. What lies within the veil is to a large extent ignored, or if touched on at all, is touched very lightly. The gravity of this condition deserves attention, for just as certainly as the future life fades out of our thinking and out of the thinking of people in general, there will come a corresponding laxity in moral life.

How little those who talk about getting on well enough with one world at a time think of what they are saying! The tiniest flower that grows must have the sun and the moon and all the stars of heaven to minister to it; and if a daisy needs so much, how much more does a man need? Cut off the influences and helps of other worlds and our earth would be a Sahara. Not a shower would ever fall or a stream overflow. And if it is nonsense to talk about one world at a time in the material universe, in the light of history and of Scripture and of the practical effects of this kind of talk upon men, it is even greater nonsense to talk about one world at a time in the universe of morals. As the attractive power of the sun and the moon produces the tides and helps to sweeten and purify the sea and makes it a great reservoir of health for the globe, so it is the pull and the spell of the other worldly, of the unseen and the eternal, that save society from moral anarchy and ruin.

No one familiar with the Scriptures can fail to note the practical use that is made in the word of God of this teaching about the future life. Nowhere is it dealt with as a theory, or a conjecture, or a speculation, or something merely of academic interest, but always as intended to bear with solemn and unescapable force upon the life that now is. Wherever it is referred to it is meant to relate to conduct—to warn men against vicious living by holding up before them the inevitable harvest, or to inspire them to struggle on in face or a thousand difficulties by

assuring them of the rewards of victory.

Give the cup of cold water; minister to the needs of the hungry and thirsty; be feet for the lame; be eyes for the blind; be a friend of the friendless; visit the fatherless and the widows; keep yourself unspotted from the world, and by and by the King will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." On the other hand, "Depart, ye cursed," will be the sentence of those who are selfish and cold-hearted, heedless of the wounded, personally immoral and impure. Thus the future life is appealed to to produce holiness here. The other worldly is called into court to help to make men what they ought to be in this world. We are to make constant use of the leverage of a future life to lead men into the kingdom of God.

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Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren uttered the following concerning some of the things prepared: Shall we stop growing in heaven, or is our entrance there not much rather the beginning of a new stage of that growth, which has no end? There, too, will not our loftiest attainments be as a platform on which we can stand to reach up to what is still higher? Will not the attitude of spirit which is inseparable from all advancement and all health here, be the attitude for the other world, too? Shall we sit there, with nothing to wish for, drowsy amid languid contentments? Or shall we there, as now, feel the truest sense of life in aspiration and motion towards unattained but possible good and goodness? Shall we not then possess all that hope by which now we are saved, with only the loss of the painful sense of incompleteness? May not a fair vision of what we shall be gleam before us, which shall excite wishes without tumult, consciousness of non-possession without pain, aspiration without the pang of yearning, certainty without fear, and work without effort? Will not the glories that are to be revealed exercise their attraction over us then? Will not this still be the description of our being—"reaching forth unto those things that are before?" I believe that thus we shall live through all the eternities that are before us, growing wiser, nobler, stronger, greater; plunging deeper into God, and being more and more filled with more and more of him. So we shall move for ever as in ascending spirals that rise ever higher, and draw ever closer to the throne we compass and to him that dwells alone.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

What Heaven Will Mean (579).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her little booklet, "He's Coming Tomorrow," tells of a worldly man of wealth who hears the tidings of the Master's coming and says: "I don't know, wife, how you feel; but I don't like this news. I don't understand it. It puts a stop to everything that I know any thing about."

"O John!" said the woman, turning towards him a face pale and fervent, and clasping her hands, "how can you say so?"

"Well, Mary, it's the truth. I don't care if I say it. I don't want to meet—well, I wish he would put it off! What does he want of me? I'd be willing to make over—well, three millions, to found a hospital, if he'd be satisfied and let me go on. Yes, I'd give three millions—to buy off from tomorrow."

"Is he not our best friend?"

"Best friend!" said the man, with a look of half fright, half anger. "Mary, you don't know what you're talking about! You know I always hated those things. There's no use in it; I can't see into them. In fact, I hate them."

She cast on him a look full of pity. "Cannot I make you see?" she said.

"No, indeed, you can't. Why, look here," he added, pointing to the papers, "here is what stands for millions! Tonight it's mine; and to-morrow it will be all so much waste paper: and then what have I left? Do you think I can rejoice? I'd give half; I'd give—yes, the whole, not to have him come these hundred years." She stretched out her thin hand towards him; but he pushed it back.

"Do you see?" said the angel to me solemnly; "between him and her there is a 'great gulf fixed.' They have lived in one house with that gulf between them for years! She cannot go to him: he cannot come to her. Tomorrow she will rise to Christ as a dewdrop to the sun; and he will call to the mountains and rocks to fall on him—not because Christ hates him, but because he hates Christ."

Again the scene was changed. We stood together in a little low attic, lighted by one small lamp, a broken chair, a rickety table, a bed in the corner where the little ones were cuddling close to one another for warmth, as they talked in soft, baby voices. "When mother comes, she will bring us some supper," said they. "But I'm so cold!" said the little outsider. "Get in the middle, then," said the other two, "and we'll warm you. Mother promised she'd make a fire when she came in, if that man would pay her." "What a bad man he is!" said the oldest boy: "he never pays mother if he can help it."

Just then the door opened; and a pale, thin woman came in, laden with packages.

She laid all down, and came to her children's bed, clasping her hands in rapture.

"Joy! joy, children! Oh, joy, joy! Christ is coming! He will be here tomorrow."

Every little bird in the nest was up, and the little arms around the mother's neck: the children believed at once. They had heard of the good Jesus. He had been their mother's only friend through many a cold and hungry day, and they doubted not he was coming.

"O mother! will he take us? He will, won't he?"

"Yes, my little ones," she said softly, smiling to herself: "He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom."

Recognition In Heaven (580).

Though some of the forms of our earthly life may not be repeated there, there will be remembrance, and friendship and love. There will be reunions of scattered families, resumptions of suspended intercourse, remaking of broken circles. Dante, his heart filled with an immortal love for Beatrice, was right when he wrote: "Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better, there where that lady lives, of whom my soul is enamored." But that expectation would have brought to him no comfort had he doubted

that he would know her, any more than it would have been a solace to David to be assured that if his dead child could not return to him, he could go to it, had he not believed that among the myriad children that throng the streets of Paradise he would recognize his own. Well-known lines of Whittier's that have fallen with soothing power on so many hearts stricken with grief over the departure of loved ones would seem only hollow mockery were it not for the implicit faith that the meeting which they foretell will be accompanied by recognition.

"Yet Love will dream and Faith will trust,
Since he who knows our need is just,
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who hopeless lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across his mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned in hours of faith
The truth, to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever Lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own."

—Selected.

The Call of Our Departed (581).

There are few indeed who have lived long in this world, and have not stood by the bed of the dying. There are many who have seen a Christian friend or brother depart—who have looked on such a one as life, but not love, ebbed away—as the eye of sense grew dim, but that of faith waxed bright and brighter. Have you heard such a one, in bidding you farewell, whisper that it was not forever; have you heard such a one tell you so to live, that death might only remove you to a place where there is no dying; and as you felt the pressure of that cold hand, and saw the earnest spirit that shone through those glazing eyes, have you not resolved and promised that, God helping you, you would? And ever since, have you not felt, that though death has sealed those lips, and that heart is turning back to clay, that voice is speaking yet, that heart is caring for you yet, that soul is remembering yet, the words it last spoke to you? From the abode of glory it says, "Come up hither!" And if we go to the grave of a loved friend, who bade us, when dying, sometimes to visit the place where he should be laid when dead—if you hold a request like that sacred—tell me, how much more earnestly should we seek to go where the conscious spirit lives than where the senseless body moulders? If day after day sees you come to shed the tear of memory over the narrow bed where that dear one is sleeping—oh, how much more should every day see you striving up the way which will conduct you where the living spirit dwells, and whence it is ever calling to you, "Come up hither!" It was the weak fancy of a dying man that bade you come to his burying-place; but it is the perpetual entreaty of a living seraph that invites you to join it there!—"The Sober Thoughts of a Country Parson."

"No More Curse" (582).

The sailor longing to set sail passes to and fro upon the shore, waiting the return of the tide, for when the tide returns the ship shall clear the harbor, and fly before the wind, and hasten home, and man can calculate the return of the tide; the astronomer waits upon his watch-tower, and notes in the heavenly places a planet or a comet, and by signs he can forecast the return of a luminary to its place in these skies; the feet of affection pace the stones of the station, waiting the return of the train, that the weary heart may be refreshed by the old face, and man can calculate the return of a train. But what of the return of a soul, nay, the return of a race of souls to their home and their allegiance, like weary birds returning to their rest? Then the strain of a glad universe shall be, "No more curse, no more pain, no more separation of lovers and friends, no more sickness, no more sighing, and no more death!" "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Rev. E. Paxton Hood, D.D.

Heaven's Intellectual Quickening (583).

One of the attractions of heaven to St. Paul, we have seen, was the increase of knowledge. I do not know if there are many minds on which this acts as a motive, I rather fancy that the majority are attracted to heaven by the heart, rather than the head, because they are expecting to be reunited there to those from whom they have been separated in this world. Some feel the attraction most in the conscience, being weary of the struggle with sin and the clinging presence of a body of death, and longing for a condition of moral perfection. But the intellectual attraction is well fitted to be a strong one, too. Many in this world have little opportunity of mental development, like those of whom it was sung:

> But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
> Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
> Chill penury represt their noble rage
> And froze the genial current of the soul.

Such will, in the next life, have ample opportunity to harvest the treasures of the mind which they have missed in this one. Intellects which have been dull and obstructed here will there experience a glorious emancipation; while those who in this world have been intellectually great, in comparison with the majority, but have felt themselves to be but as children picking up a few shells on the shore of truth, while the vast ocean stretched before them, unknown and unexplored, will there have ample leisure and boundless scope for the prosecution of their successful investigations.—Prof. James Stalker, D.D.

LXXVI. ETERNAL VIGILANCE THE PRICE OF VICTORY.

"Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape."—1 Corinthians 10: 12, 13.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D., said:

I. In the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, you find a remarkable discussion of temptation, and again in James, but they do not cover the same ground. That in the tenth of First Corinthians is about escaping temptation, and the other is about enduring temptation. Now, look at them for a moment. First, 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it."

Now turn to James 1:12-14, and let us get his testimony about enduring temptation: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed."

II. Temptation is the common experience of human beings. It is absolutely impossible naturally to escape it. As long as we are in the world we shall meet it. It will come from the world, from the flesh, from the devil. The subtlest of our foes is the self-life. You cannot expect to escape, but there is no necessity of your being overcome by it as a child of God. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

III. Inasmuch as there is a community of temptation, and you can not miss it, here is the first encouragement: God is faithful. It does not say God is merciful or God is gracious. Faithful is a word of obligation, and the idea is there of the obligation on the part of God to stand by the tempted soul. Isn't that magnificent, that the moment you take your stand against temptation, the whole Godhead is behind you, and there can be no temptation too great, because no temptation can be greater than God? And he is faithful to you. He will stand by you. He regards himself as under obligation not to allow you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. Here is for us a definite teaching that whenever we are tempted there is a way to escape, which God in his fidelity has provided. Look for the way of escape and go in it.

* * *

Rev. Dr. W. L. Watkinson commented on this verse as follows: In one place the Scriptures liken the life of man to the life of a tree; now

a tree may suffer by a lightning flash marring it in a moment, or by a parasite slowly and insidiously strangling it.

No sudden temptation can destroy us whilst we live at our spiritual best. It is said that lightning generally strikes the rotten tree. Let this be as it may, it is certain when fir tree or cedar of the King's garden falls some secret rottenness has eaten out the heart of it.

No parasite, no creeping evil fastens upon those who abide in strength. Stealthy murderers wait all around, and watch their opportunity to seize upon us, but in the glowing, growing life they find no lodgment, no minute vantage ground to which they may cling. With watchfulness, humility, and dependence we are safe wherever it may please God to bring us. Have I, however, fallen into condemnation? Peter's Lord is mine, and he will heal all my backslidings, and love me freely. Let me put his promise to the proof.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Underestimating Danger (584).

A reckless man in a zoological garden once seized a venomous serpent by the nape of the neck and held it up before his companions. The man thought he had the serpent wholly in his power. But it began to coil its long body about his arm and then slowly tighten its grasp till the man in agony was obliged to drop his hold on its neck. Quickly then it turned and bit him, and soon the man was dead.

He thought he was strong enough to play with the serpent, and then thrust it from him when wearied of the play. Many think they are strong enough to play with temptation of any sort, but they find sooner or later that the temptation has mastered them. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," said Christ. It is the entering into temptation which is to be guarded against.—Morning Star.

The Unexpectedness of Temptation (585).

Temptations never give us notice. Can we expect them to do so? The sailor does not expect to have notice of every gale of wind that blows upon him. The soldier in battle does not reckon to have notice of every bullet that is coming his way. By what apparatus could we be kept aware of every advance of the Evil One? The very essence of temptation often lies in the suddenness of it; we are carried off our feet before we are aware. Yet we must not say because of this, "I can not help it," for we ought to be all the more watchful and live all the nearer to God in prayer. We are bound to stand against a sudden temptation as much as against a slower mode of attack. We must look to the Lord to be preserved from the arrow which flieth by day and the pestilence which walketh in darkness. We are to cry to God for grace that, let the gusts of temptation come how they may and when they may, we may always be found in Christ, resting in him, covered with his divine power.—Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

Scrupulous Precautions (586).

Sir James Herschel tells how, after his telescopes became famous and were distributed quite widely through Europe, he began to receive complaints. Men said to him, in angry letters, "We do not see what

you see." In his response to them he said: "Perhaps you do not take the care of your observations that I do," and he spoke of one thing, "Do you take care of the matter of temperature? The instrument with which I examine the stars must be of the same temperature of the stars as nearly as may be, and when I observe on a winter night I place my glass on the lawn at Greenwich, and let it stand there until the instrument comes to be of the temperature of the air. But beyond that," he said, "not only must my instrument be of the right temperature, but I must be. Oftentimes," he said, "I have been out in the winter air for two hours before I would open my glass, because I must come to be of the same temperature as my instrument itself."—Selected.

Provision for the Unexpected (587).

Life is full of illustrations of the need of provision for the unexpected. Go along any river in summer and notice the height of the arches of the bridge over the low waters. Men build them high for the swollen torrent, the unusual, ready for the unexpected. There was a storm at sea, during which a sailor on watch at night was swept overboard. There were two men on watch together, and it was the one least exposed that the wave, leaping over the bow, swept away. When the captain was asked how that could be, he said, "Because the second man was holding on to nothing." The second man, like the five foolish virgins, made no provision against the unexpected.—Selected.

Dallying with Temptation (588).

Do not dally with temptation. Do not tarry in the presence of it. Do not do in thought the act to which you are tempted. Avoid the least thought of it. The thinking has its immediate bodily effect and has its immediate tendency to pass into act.—Henry Churchill King.

Our Sole Protection (589).

Jesus shows us the mighty power of the word of God to safeguard us from evil and the evil one by the "Parable of the Unclean Spirit." I call it the "Parable of the Empty Mind." For some reason the unclean spirit left the man once possessed and, the man was free from his influence. But finding no place to rest, the unclean spirit, after long wandering, came back and found the man unoccupied. Then he went in search of other spirits, and when he found seven such, all worse than he was, he came and with these entered the man again, and the last state of that man was seven fold worse than his first state.

Christmas Evans, the Welsh divine, puts the play of his imagination on to this parable. He follows the outcast spirit in his wanderings and fills in the empty spaces of the parable. He says that the unclean spirit was kept out of other minds, because he found these filled with God's Word. As the uncelan spirit passed along the highway, he saw a plowboy entering a field to begin the work of the day. He said: "Ah, here is a human house into which I may enter and live. I will go and possess that lad. I will take the power of his youth, and I will make it a power for wickedness. I will use every faculty of his in the work of advancing crime." As he drew near to enter the soul of the lad, he heard him singing one of the verses of the sacred psalm which the members of his

home had sung that very morning at family worship: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Not liking these words of the Book which filled the young man's heart, the unclean spirit said: "This place is too dry for me: I must go elsewhere." Going elsewhere he saw a schoolgirl on her way to school. She was a beautiful girl, sweet of face and graceful of form. "Ah." said the evil spirit, coveting her, "I'll work through her. I'll creep to her side and whisper into her ear an evil thought that will set her soul on fire and turn her into a beautiful tempter. Mighty for evil will she forever be." But as he drew near, he found her with an open Bible in her hand, writing on her memory as a motto for life these picturesque words of the One Hundred and Forty-fourth Psalm: "Our daughters shall be as cornerstones carved after the similitude of a palace." Rebounding as though he had struck one of the shields of God, he said: "There is no room for me here: I must look elsewhere for a habitation."

At this instant he found himself in front of the church manse. The old minister of Christ, who had served the church forty years, without a stain upon his character, lay dying. "Ah," said the unclean spirit, "I will enter the soul of this man of God. True, my stay must be short; but I can do a deadly work. Now is the time of the old saint's weakness. I will create doubt within him. I will make him talk like a heathen and an unbeliever, and die under a cloud; and thus I will weaken the whole force of his long ministry." With wretched daring he entered the manse to carry out his horrible plan. But the man of God was saying with the intonations of unswerving faith: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and staff they do comfort me."

It was as though the evil spirit had met God himself face to face. He fled in fear from the chamber of death, and stopped not until he reached the man whom he had so lately left. It was with joy that he found his soul still untenanted; and it was with a determination never to leave him that he gathered seven companion spirits more wicked than himself and re-entered the man.—Rev. David A. Gregg, D.D.

Failures Result from Relaxed Vigilance (590).

Heart-keeping is much like house-keeping. There must be continual sweeping out of dirt and clearing out of rubbish—a daily washing of dishes, and a perpetual battle with all sorts of vermin. If heart-cleaning could be done up once for all, then the Christian might discharge all his graces and have an easy time of it. And just because the assaults of subtle temptations are so constant, and the uprisings of sinful passions are so frequent, and the task of keeping the inward man what it ought to be, is so difficult, many a one who begins a religious life gets discouraged, and makes a wretched failure. The question with every Christian is: Shall these accursed Amalekites of temptation burn up all my spiritual possessions, and over-run my soul? Shall outward assaults or inward weakness drive me to discouragement, and disgrace me before my Master and before the world? Or shall they drive me to Jesus Christ, who will give me the victory?—Theodore L. Cuyler.

LXXVII. LOVE SUPREME.

"But the greatest of these is love." (R. V.)—1 Corinthians 13:13.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Prof. Henry Drummond in his famous monograph of Love, says: Every one has asked himself the great question of antiquity as of the modern world: What is the summum bonum—the supreme good? You have life before you. That is the burning question for you to face: What is the supreme object of desire—the supreme gift to covet? We have been accustomed to be told that the greatest thing in the religious world is faith. That has been the key-note for centuries of the evangelical religion; and we have learned to look upon that as the greatest thing in the world. Well; we are wrong. If we have been told that, we have been told wrong. I take you to Christianity at its source; 1 Cor. 13, and there we read, "The greatest of these is love." It is not an oversight. Paul was speaking of faith just a moment before. He says: "If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." It is not an oversight, and it is not prejudice. A man is apt to recommend to others his own strong point. Love was not Paul's strong point. There is a beautiful tenderness which the observing student can detect as Paul gets old—growing and ripening all through his character; but the hand that wrote "The greatest of these is love." when we meet it first, is stained with blood. Nor is Paul singular in singling out love as the summum bonum. The three masters of Christianity are agreed about it. Peter says: "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves." And John goes farther: "God is love."

* * *

Newell Dwight Hillis wrote:

Love abides because it gives joy in service and turns the great mind into the great heart. There are five hungers in men. I. There is the hunger for food and raiment, that gives harvest, tools, and industries. II. There is the hunger for knowledge, that gives schools, books, papers and literature. III. There is the hunger for fame, that gives office, rank, political parties and thrones of influence. IV. There is the hunger for beauty that gives the fine arts and makes utility blossom and fruit. V. Finally, there is the hunger for affection, that gives homes, fireside songs, and one hundred thousand sweet flowers and fruits of service which cannot grow without love. In vain the husbandman sows seed in February's frozen clods. But when the great lover comes, the harvest-making sun, and melts away the frost, the earth opens her arms, takes the little seed in and broods it into life; and out of the sun-lover's warmth comes the shock and sheaf. The scholar shining with cold white light, patronizing the poor, holding the ignorant in contempt, is impotent to influence men. But whoever has a passionate love for the people, whoever yearns with compassion for the poor, seeing them as sheep that have no shepherd, has found a golden key to men's hearts.

G. H. Morrison wrote:

It is a matter of infinite debate where precisely religion begins. Is it in fear of the darkness, in dread of the unknown; is it in some dim feeling of dependence? We may have our own thoughts on that matter, as a fascinating question of psychology; but wherever religion long ago began, it can never be perfect till it reaches love. If no relationship of earth is perfect till love has entered with its benediction, how can a man's relationship to God be perfect, if love is wanting there? For true religion is not a thing of doctrine, nor of eager and intellectual speculation: it is the tie that binds the life on earth to the infinite and eternal life beyond the veil. I grant you that the distance is so vast there that you cannot gauge it by any earthly tie. I do not like that form of pious speech that is all familiar, and has no place for awe. Yet the fact remains that every earthly tie is but a shadow of our tie with God, and if these cannot be perfect without love, no more, you may be sure of it, can that. Only when a man can lift his eyes, and say with a cry of victory, 'God loves me;' only when he believes, though all be dark, that the God who reigneth is a God of love; only then does his religion become real, a very present help in time of trouble, a well of water in the burning desert, a cooling shadow in a weary land.

It is just that and nothing else which makes ours the perfect religion. For the perfecting of religion love is needed, and that love has been revealed in Christ.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Love the Mainspring (592).

There is nothing in all the world so brave as love; it will do and dare to the uttermost. When the last word has been said about the selfishness of mankind, the cruelty of ambition, the relentless persistence of hate, it still remains true that love outruns and outlasts them all. It is the mainspring of the world that keeps the whole machinery in motion. "Whatever things are sweet or fair, love makes them so." Wherever nobility, goodness, or heroism springs into life, love lies at the root. From the rose-vine planted by the garden wall, to the Christ uttering words of forgiveness from the Cross, it is all love's story.—Selected.

Love the Master Motive (593).

Raymond Lull was a brilliant student in the University of Montpelier. Later he became a professor there. He turned his back on his splendid prospects and flung his life on the Mohammedan world in the period when to preach Christ was to court death. A year and a half he was imprisoned in a dungeon. Twice he was banished from the shores of north Africa. At last, taken beyond the wall, he was stoned to death. As the stones were falling upon him, before he became unconscious, he said, "He that loves not lives not, and he that lives by the Life never dies."

He was a great hero, a great Christian hero, and he gives us the secret of his heroic life in this great saying at his death.—Selected.

Love Indispensable (595).

Unless our hearts go out to people we shall never reach them

nearts. We may talk to them forever, but unless we have this loving sympathy we might as well be silent. It is possible to pelt people with the gospel, and to produce the effect of flinging stones at them. Much Christian work comes to nothing mainly for that reason.—Alexander Maclaren.

Love the Remedy (596).

There are two maxims of Goethe's which contain the pure gold of truth in one of the most trying relations of life—our relation to those who are developing gifts and capacities above us: "Against the great superiority of another there is no remedy but love;" and "To praise a man is to put one's self on his level." In these brief and pithy sayings is contained the whole philosophy of a noble attitude towards superiority of all kinds.—Hamilton W. Mabie.

Love One Another (597).

There is one debt that can never be discharged in such a way that the obligation to pay it is ended. That is the debt to "love one another." After we have made all payments of love that we are able, there still remains the obligation to love. With truth has it been said: "Every man has a right to our love. It is his due and our debt." The attitude of others to us, their lovableness or their unloveliness, does not release us from our obligation to love them. If God were governed in his love to us by our lovableness, we would be excluded from all enjoyment of his love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Love's Fruitage (598).

John Howard, the philanthropist, held that his "superfluities ought to give way to other men's conveniences; that his conveniences ought to give way to others' necessities, and that his necessities ought to give way to other people's extremities." And he not only held it, but acted upon it.

Lady Huntingdon, a woman of noble birth, sold her jewels that she might support the college she had founded, erect chapels throughout the realm and support the preachers who occupied her pulpits, among whom was that favorite and eloquent sacred orator, George Whitfield, who, like a blazing meteor, swept over England and America, moving many to repentance and to a newness of life.

Alexandra, now Queen-Dowager of England, after receiving at one time a choice bouquet from Queen Victoria, entered a soldiers' hospital. A flower falling from her bouquet was picked up by an afflicted soldier, who impressed a kiss of gratitude upon it and handed it back to her. Struck by this, she retraced her steps to the head of the ward and passed down the whole length of it, bestowing buds and flowers on everyone she passed till all were gone. In that popular painting known as "Flowery Charity," the touching scene is reproduced. Upon the marriage of her daughter, she took the lovely bride's bouquet off to a London children's hospital she often visited, and laid a flower on the pillow of each little patient.

At the Battle of Fort Donelson, a sergeant seeing an enemy aiming at the captain's breast, sprang instantly in front of his commander and

received the ball himself and fell back dead into the arms of the one he had saved. He had said before that such had been the captain's father's kindness to him that he would do anything to save his son.

During a plague at Marseilles it was decided in a council of physicians that there could be no rescue from the ravages of the fell disease until someone should dissect a body and ascertain its seat within the system, but that it would be certain death to the operator. There was one, Guyon, skilled surgeon, who arose and said: "At daybreak tomorrow I will, in the interest of this community, make the examination." He retired to his room, made his will, and engaged in religious services. At early dawn he performed the operation upon the body of one who had died of the plague during the night. He put down each observation and at the close threw the paper into vinegar that the contagion might be dissolved, retired to a convenient spot and in twelve hours died.—Rev. W. W. Wilson, D.D.

LXXVIII. THE RISEN CHRIST.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept."—1 Corinthians 15:20.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In an inspiring sermon on the resurrection preached by Rev. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, he said: Some mourn the loss of loved ones, oblivious of the truth that death is a seeming, and not a reality; it is as Martineau remarks: "God's method of colonization." Would you detain that suffering one, or call him back again? Nay, for those who leave your household, the bitterness is past, the strife is won, and ere they depart, they wish themselves away, and watch eagerly for the brighter shore, where they must presently make their landing. Our faith follows them into the heavenly places. Like Elisha, as he beheld the ascending Elijah, we, too, have foretastes of their burning bliss and higher vocation. There is no separation between them and us save our sin. The nearer we live to God the nearer we are to them. The spotless and the undefiled walk with them in white. And when the days of our purification are accomplished, though our outward man then perish, our inward man shall be renewed and fitted for the greater offices of heaven. Here, then, I make my stand with my people, in this magnificent hope, which is a staunch ship, conveying us from time to eternity. No puny human speculation shall tempt me to forsake the craft that has weathered every storm, and take to the crazy cock-boats that have been overturned a thousand times. I would as soon think of leaving the Lusitania in mid-ocean for a fragile skiff as I would of leaving the deathless fact of Christ's eternal and saving relations with man for metaphysical subtleties or esoteric cults. We do not so much accept the Resurrection as it accepts us. The power is not ours; it is in him who has entered into all our sufferings, and is now exalted above them.

The unseen and the eternal are before you; their living forces are seen at the height of paramountcy in Christ Jesus. His sinlessness raised him beyond the results of sin, and his triumph seals his redemptive ministry. In the hour when he came forth from under the grave clothes and gave visible proof to his nearest friends that he had arisen, rebuking their unbelief and dread, all he was and all he taught received the impress of God's approval. For had his crucified body remained in that Syrian tomb, it would have been the ghastliest sepulcher that history has known. No battlefield where the slain lay in winrows could have been so fatal to human destiny. His largest and reiterated claims, his sayings concerning his own deathlessness and his power to bestow eternal life upon the world would have perished with his body. The bony grip of the terrible hand of monstrous death would still press down alike on the best and worst of men. Save for Jesus, a fathomless gulf yawns at the feet of every living creature. Nothing intervenes between us and blank nothingness, except the words, the deeds, the victory of our Master.

* * *

1. Cor. xv. 12-19, prelude to above text, was treated by C. H. Spurgeon as follows:

Certain great facts are the pillars of the faith.
It is sad when these are denied by professors.
The resurrection has been thus assailed.
To deny this is to involve terrible results.
Let us not tamper with any truth.
If there be no resurrection—

I. Christ is not risen.
   If impossible, he cannot be risen.
   If those in him, then not himself.
   If not Christ, not his people.
   If not his people, not Christ.

II. Apostolic preaching falls.
   1. They were false witnesses.
   2. All they said must be suspected.
   3. Specially all they built on the resurrection.
   4. Paul and all of them put out of court.

III. Faith becomes delusion.
   1. They believed a lie.
   2. They risked their souls on a falsehood.
   3. It would not bear the trial.
   4. It would be useless soon.

IV. They remained in their sins.
   1. There is no atonement made.
   2. There is no life in Christ.

V. The godly dead had perished.
   1. They are yet in their sins.
   2. They cannot rise.
   3. Their whole confidence was a lie.

VI. Our source of joy is gone.
   1. We have given up sensuous joys.
   2. We have learned superior things.
   3. We have had higher hopes.

See where it all hinges.
Not on our moral condition.
Nor on our spiritual state.
Nor on our sincerity and earnestness.
Nor on discoveries or science.
Believe then that it is most surely true!

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Lord Has Risen (599).

He is become the first fruits of them that slept. This is the ground and glory of our hope. He tasted death for every man that we might have triumph over the last enemy. As he rose and is ascended to the Father, so shall we rise and ascend; for, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He is Son of man and Son of God. This is the surety of our faith. He was a man, tempted in all points, as we are tempted, yet without sin.

In this his manhood conquered. He was God. Ere he gave up the ghost upon the cross he prayed for his enemies and slayers: Father, forgive them; they know not what they do. He was God. When he died the heavens put on mourning, and the earth rocked with emotion. He was God. He came forth from the rock-hewn sepulcher, having finished his offering for sin and given the last touch of fullness and joy to the gospel of redemption and resurrection. Christ is risen from the dead. Our faith is not in vain. "Death is swallowed up in victory." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Independent.

Christ is Alive! (600).

Dr. Dale was once writing an Easter sermon, and, when halfway through, the thought of the risen Lord broke in upon him as it had never done before. "Christ is alive," I said to myself, "alive," and then I paused. "Alive," and then I paused again; "alive—can that really be true? Living as really as I myself am?" I got up and walked about, repeating "Christ is living;" "Christ is living." At first it seemed strange and hardly true; but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory; yes, Christ is living. It was to me a new discovery. I thought all along I had believed it, but not until that moment did I feel sure about it. I then said, "My people shall know it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do now." For months after, and in every sermon, the living Christ was his one great theme, and there and then began the custom of singing in Carr's Lane on every Sunday morning an Easter hymn.—Marcus Dods, D.D.

The Presence of Christ (601).

Once we were talking with a priest of the Roman Catholic church. He said: "There is no joy comparable to the glow and warmth of soul that follows the taking of the sacrament by the communicant. A delicious warmth and glow, a holy radiance, is diffused throughout his breast by the living Christ whom he has just appropriated." The Protestant does not deny that Christ lives in the sacrament, but he goes much further and says that he is in all places where his followers are. When we kneel at the altar he is there; when we gather in the chapel for common prayer he is there; when we pray in our secret chamber, he meets us there; when we walk through wood and field, climb high mountain or sail great seas, we find him there, especially wherever his children are serving, blessing, loving, sacrificing, there he is, and he is with little children in their play.

"We may not climb the heavenly steeps,
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we sound the lowest deeps
For him no depths can drown—

"But warm, sweet, tender even yet
A present help is he,
And faith hath yet its Olivet,
And love its Galilee."

It is this universal presence of the risen Christ that fills our heart with joy. It is the eternal joy of the Church. It is the cause of the jubilant note of Easter. Easter is not so much the celebration of the fact that no tomb could hold Jesus Christ, as it is of the great wonder that he is alive for evermore. And our joy songs celebrate not his ascension out of the grave into heaven, but the fact that he came back from death to dwell with his Church through the Holy Spirit.—Lynch.

The Power of the Resurrection (602).

To those who have never felt the power of Christ's resurrection, whose hearts have never rung true for God and duty, I recommend the study of the brave deeds done in the name of the risen Jesus; deeds belonging to every age; deeds which have most improved the condition of the earth, and this despite the fact that frequently the doers were treated as the offscouring scum of the race. Despised, punished, martyred, their testimony is clear on one point—that an authority they could not withstand determined their course and kindled their energies. Working evenly and calmly, it brought them to the scenes of their conquest and heroism, that men and nations might live again in their lives, fortified by their examples. Have you that power which robbed the grave of any terror and clothed Stephen's mortality with triumph? Could you have a more practical test than the opening of a closed gate beyond which is a divinely fulfilled, divinely employed self? What language concerning the state of the departed, or the hidden romance and fascination of the future state can surpass the earthly story of those who have been able to do what they most longed to do, because they had passed out of the kingdom of evil into this habitation of the sons of God? Is there no mark on St. Francis, St. Theresa, John Bunyan or Lancelot Andrewes which assures us that they have high origin and a princely outlook? Angels have never lived in their condition, nor contended as they contended. The chantings of these first-born spiritual beings are overwhelmed by the mighty anthems of the redeemed, who died and rose again with Jesus, who overcame the evil you draw to your breast, and in the strength of their King broke the bonds you fondle. Arise, I bid you, from low groveling attitude of soul, and Christ shall give you life. Here stands your Conqueror, who comes to set you free, to grant you songs for sighing and turn your night to day.—Cadman.

The Resurrection (603).

Of some experiences we can afterwards see that, however dark they were, they have now justified themselves to our satisfaction. Many a thing which we thought at the time was a crucifixion has proved to be an enthronement. But the difficulty comes when we cannot see that. It is when the event looks as black and hateful to us in the retrospect as it appeared in the prospect, when the sting of it still remains with no alleviation, when the sense of injustice does not yield—then is the time we need the truth of the resurrection. Here is the rent in the veil, which permits us to look upon the perpetual law of the spiritual world. "Ought Christ to have suffered?" is answered by a tremendous affirmative. "Yes, he ought." How do we know he ought? By the greater good which has come out of it. But

now, suppose that you and I cannot see any good coming out of our losses and sorrow, as sometimes we may not see. What answer then can be made to vindicate these experiences to our own minds? Oh, it is the answer which the God of Easter gave to those fear-stricken disciples when, out of that awful collapse there came the serene conviction that Jesus Christ was not defeated, but victorious; that the Father he had said was good, was indeed in full command; that the kingdom of heaven was not a dream, but a mighty reality. And out of that seemingly hopeless wreck there rose the spirit of Jesus Christ and it went forth into the world, gathering men into its transforming power, creating new life and bringing in the purer, brighter day. This is the meaning of Easter. It is the witness it brings to the victoriousness of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the unveiling of this permanent principle that out of all evil our Father is bringing a greater good. And here, too, is the answer God makes to us when we cannot see the good coming out of some of our dark experiences, when the blackness of night lingers and the dawn delays its light. "Oh, eyes that are weary and hearts that are sad." It is not immortality alone that you most need. You need to see the God of Easter, you need to be able to believe, in the illumination of this great day, that God is in full command still and that sometime and somewhere he will cause you to know that your darkness will be exchanged for marvelous light.

In other words, Easter means that God, the God of Jesus Christ, is always and forever vindicating the human life that does his will—always and everywhere justifying the spirit which was in his Son our Lord; always and everywhere working to bring good out of evil and gain out of loss.—Rev. L. Mason Clark, D.D.

Testimonies to Immortality (604).

Max Muller said, "Without a belief in personal immortality religion surely is like an arch resting on one pillar, like a bridge ending in an abyss." A scientist like Sir Humphrey Davy can say, "We know enough to hope for immortality, the individual immortality, of the better part of man." Southey said, "Faith in hereafter is as necessary for the intellectual as for the moral character." It is Wordsworth who speaks of "The faith that looks through death." Longfellow was enraptured with the idea, "Thou glorious spiritland! Oh, that I could behold thee as thou art, the re-giver of life, and light, and love, and the dwelling-place of those beloved ones whose being has flourished onward like a silver-clear stream into the solemn sounding main, into the ocean of eternity." It was Goethe who once remarked to a friend, "Setting, nevertheless, the soul is always the same sun. I am fully convinced it is a being, of a nature quite indestructible, and that its activity continues from eternity." The great philosopher Kant, wrote, "The summum bonum then is practically only possible on the supposition of the immortality of the soul." John Fiske, the evolutionist, gave expression to his belief thus, "I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work." Again he says, "Each new discovery but places man upon a higher pinnacle than ever and lights the future with the radiant color of hope."—E. F. Wiest, D.D.

The Great Lesson (605).

A recent periodical has a striking reproduction in color called "The Poisoned Pool." Two ranchmen, lost in a Nevada desert, almost crazed by thirst, see a pool. One starts toward it, but the other makes a desperate effort to restrain him, recognizing from its greenish sheen that it is impregnated with arsenic. It is an eloquent sermon. Men—immortal souls, destined to live in time and in eternity—are lost in sin, and in danger of losing the blessedness which may be theirs for all eternity. Win them; get them to consent to have God's Spirit set the stamp of heaven on their souls. And when the stars shall have faded out and the sun become a cinder, their cups of gladness will still be running over in the Father's house of many mansions. This is the supreme Easter teaching after all.

Analogies From Nature (606).

Here in my study is a cocoon. Months ago I watched the grub weaving its own mausoleum. Within that cocoon today there is a chrysalis, which I am hourly expecting to emerge in an entirely new form from that which now is. Once it was a grub, which began to spin for itself a new covering, then came a change and we have what became a chrysalis, and now in this chrysalis there is something beginning to move and to change and gradually working its way out of the shell which has enveloped it, until one day I shall see the flutter of wings and there will come to view something a thousand times more beautiful than it now is.

Whether or not, if one looking at the grub could see the butterfly in it, I do not know, but I do know that that which was a grub, then a chrysalis, is gradually becoming a butterfly. Here we have an existence, a new life, under new conditions, with a new environment, absolutely different from that which we had before. From the analogy of the cocoon, one can conceive that the soul will throw off the clothes that enfold it, and, like the butterfly, will rise into space and instead of a cave, a grave, for its existence, there will be a whole hemisphere.—Rev. N. Carter Daniell, D.D.

Our Attitude Toward Death (607).

Our attitude toward death—death the inevitable—will have much to do with determining our experience in life. Do we merely thrust it from our minds as an unwelcome intruder?

Or have we accepted Christ's glorious adjustment of the whole matter for us, and do we rest placidly in this? A young Scotch girl, taken ill in this country, knowing that she must die, begged to be taken back to her native land. On the homeward voyage she kept repeating, "O, for a glimpse o' the hills o' Scotland!" Before the voyage was half over it was evident that she could not live to see her native land. One evening, just at the sun-setting, they brought her on deck. Someone said to her, "Is it not beautiful?" "Yes," but I'd rather see the hills o' Scotland."

For a little while she closed her eyes, and then opening them again, and with a look of unspeakable gladness on her face, she exclaimed, "I see them noo, and aye they're bonnie." Then, with a surprised look, she added, "I never kenned before that it was the hills o' Scotland where the prophet saw the horseman and the chariots, but I see them all, and we are almost there." Then closing her eyes, she soon passed away.

LXXIX. LIVING EPISTLES.

"Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men."—2 Cor. 3:2.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Wilton Merle Smith in preaching on this theme said: Truth is hidden and unseen without personality, but let the truth charge and possess the personality, and it flashes on the world with the power and eloquence of inspiration. Truth leaps to utterance only in personality. Personality becomes burning eloquence only when inspired by truth.

And this today is the power of Christian life and Christian character. It is truth enforced by the power of personality. God does not teach Christianity by the stars. It finds living utterance only in the lives and at the lips of Christians. This is what Christ meant when he said, "Ye are the light of the world." The power of Christianity illustrated in life is not alone the power of truth tried and proven, but of truth manifested and vivified by personality. This today is the grandest power on earth. Men put their shoes from off their feet before one, who, inspired and thrilled by truth, is intensely and deadly in earnest. Evil cowers and shrinks away before the eye that flashes the truth and the brow that is illumined by it. Truth, which in the furnace of deep conviction has been fused and forged with personality, is and must be a living, burning power in the world. In this way a single Christian may be like John the Baptist, a burning and a shining light, flashing the truth he lives from every window of the soul.

* * *

The following eloquent summary of this truth is by Rev. John T. McFarland, D.D.: Christ came again to live in the lives of his followers. And so his larger life has been lived out in Christian history; the record of the centuries is his continued biography. He has lived again in the saints of all ages; the beauty and glory of his character have been illustrated in the lives of all who have received him into their hearts. The sanctity of his holy birth has thrown a blessed light over the motherhood and infancy of the world. His feet have pressed the soil of every land, and his lips have uttered the speech of every tongue in those who have gone forth as his heralds. His meekness, his patience, his tenderness, his sincerity, his unselfishness, his love have appeared again in millions of illumined faces, in multiplied deeds of kindly charity, in self-sacrifices and noble self-denials, in forgiveness and in bonds of brotherly love. He has stood by the world's beds of pain and laid his tender touch upon the sick and suffering, and many a soul drifting out into the deep mystery of death has seen again his smile of hope and cheer in the bended face of some minister of mercy. The old miracle of the multiplied loaves and fishes has been repeated over and over again in the generous charities which have responded to the cry of hunger; and many a Magdalene has recognized him again in the pitying look that is without scorn, and the pure, strong hand extended in kindly help. He has borne again and again his heavy cross, and gone to martyrdom amid flames and blood in those

who have witnessed for the truth before judges and kings, and has risen again in the repeated triumphs of his cause. His voice has been heard in the great reformers who have called the generations to repentance, and his love has expressed itself in the great philanthropists who have taken the world's woes upon their hearts, and his purposes have been unfolded and carried forward in the great world-wide enterprises of his kingdom. This has been continued manifestation, continued and cumulative revelation—manifestation of the Christly character in redeemed humanity, and the revelation of the divine purposes in the unfoldings of history.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Raymond said: If the profoundest influence of our lives may be unconscious and private, what manner of persons ought we to be?

I. We see the necessity for each in his own individual way of entire consecration to that which is highest and noblest. If not alone our words but also our deeds, our faces and our frames, our smiles and our sighs, our gestures and our gait, our manners and our mantles, be, unconsciously to ourselves, the representatives of the attributes of that God whom we profess to reverence, of that Christ by whose name we call ourselves, is it a matter of little moment what shall be even the wording of our compliment, or the tone of our greeting? No half way religion merely for Sundays or at public worship—nothing but whole-hearted service during all the week days, during all our play as well as work, will rescue us from an unconscious and private influence for evil.

II. We see the necessity of early consecration. All methods that are spiritual are apt to influence the inner motives first; the outer actions afterwards. As a rule, it takes time, and a long time often, for the love within the soul to mold the external bearing of the man into full conformity with itself. Better begin early in life, then, before habits have become fixed, and when it is easy to form new ones.

III. We see the necessity of continual reconsecration; of consecration keeping pace through all our lives with the increase of our knowledge and the broadening of our interests. We are Christians when we begin to follow the Christ, no matter with how faltering faith, how feeble love, how tottering footsteps. But, remember, not until we reach the standard of our Lord himself, "till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," shall our unconscious and private influence be all that it should be. Not until then shall we cease, in some material matters, to misrepresent the character of the Christian, and need to plead the mercy of God because we mock him with our imperfect service. Remember that, aside from what can be gathered from sources far less influential, our friends and the world about us can never reach a higher standard of life than we and our friends and the world about us set for one another.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Pattern-Maker's Rule (608).

My chum was an apprentice in the pattern shop. Sometimes I would eat my lunch with him, and then together we roamed about the shop, studying the new machines as well as the old ones. But one of the things that strongly impressed me was his set of "shrinkage" rules. I

discovered that every pattern was made larger than the mould was intended to be, because when that pattern was put into the sand, and the mould was cast, the casting came out smaller than the pattern, because of the shrinkage in the cooling metal. For cast-iron the rule was made an eighth of an inch larger to the foot; for brass, three-sixteenths, and for steel, one-quarter of an inch.

But so our models and our ideals always suffer in the work of embodiment. Beethoven tells us that his beautiful symphony is but an empty echo of the heavenly music he heard in his dream. It lost its divinest charm when he transferred it to manuscript. Emerson says, "Hitch your wagon to a star." It may be easier to build castles in the air than to construct huts upon the ground; but the man who never has a vision cannot even build a hut that will really be worth while. The dreamer has his place in the world's work, for every machine and every great enterprise was dreamed out before it was worked out. But dreaming and doing must go together. Each by itself alone makes man either a drone or a drudge.

Especially should the intensely practical man—that "hard-headed" fellow—learn to center his thoughts on things that are not always to be found in the work-a-day world. It will give him a broader outlook, and it will round off some of those sharp corners that sometimes irritate his fellows.

That pattern-maker's shrinkage rule taught me that if my life was to square itself with the plans laid out for me by God, so that it would harmonize and fit in with other worthy lives and plans, my ideal as to what I should be and do must be higher and better than the average, for those ideals would suffer grievously when transmuted into practical every-day living. If my ideals were higher than the average, perhaps I would make a pretty good, ordinary sort of a fellow.

An art student once fell asleep over the task given him by his master. As he lay there the master came into his studio, and with a swift glance saw the narrowness of the student's unfinished work. Taking a crayon he wrote across the face of the canvas the single word "Amplius"—larger. When the young fellow awoke he grasped his master's idea, and as he realized how cramped had been the vision of his work, he received a new inspiration, and later he became one of the world's greatest painters.

As Jesus Christ looks into every man's life he writes across it the word "larger"—fuller. He himself said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." It would truly be a fine thing to measure up even to the best that has already come to us in our visions, for if we were one-half as good as we know how to be, we would be twice as good as we are.—Rev. Charles Stelzle.

Influence for Good and Evil (609).

A single grain of iodine will give color to 7,000 times its weight of water; so, spiritually, one sin may affect the whole life. If the evil that assails us were as frightful in its aspect as in its essence, we should run little danger from its assaults; but too often it besets us in fair forms and in dazzling colors, and herein lies our peril. And this evil is not confined to our own lives but involves others.—Selected.

The Face Speaks (610).

A man carries in his face the argument of his life. We hear today of specialists in face-architecture; beauty doctors, experts in washes and cosmetics, who will clarify your skin, remove its wrinkles, give to your nose the fashionable angle—procure you, in short, a new face for money. 'Tis a stucco business at best, at which nature, the true artist, silently laughs. The face made in Bond street does not wear well. Ladies' maids, who see it of mornings, have their opinion of it. Meantime, in high disdain of this kind of performance, there is going on another process, the process of spiritual law. The artists here are hidden in the soul. They work with the surest of touches, which none can mistake. Their materials are the character, the thought, the daily deed of the man himself. They catch his portrait and paint it on his features. There, on those few inches of surface, lies his life record. There is no contradiction of it possible. High thoughts, noble impulses, clean actions work themselves into those inches, filling them with their own quality. Baseness, too, of all sorts sets here its image and superscription. How searching is that word of Emerson: "What you are speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you are saying!"—J. Brierly.

His Wife's Example (611).

An old man told me that there was nothing which had so influenced his life as a thing which his wife did on the night of their marriage. She handed him a Bible and said, "We'll have the reading." He had never prayed aloud in his life, but when the chapter was ended she knelt down and he had to kneel, too, and pray. That was a good beginning, and the Greek proverb says that "the beginning is half of the whole."—Dr. David Smith.

Responsibility (612).

In the Wierz Gallery at Brussels there is a picture called "Napoleon's Welcome to Hell." It is the most frightful picture I ever saw. The great captain is just entering the infernal gates; and from the gloom in the back-ground emerges a throng of his victims; men with crippled limbs and blood streaming down their faces; women bereaved with fatherless children in their arms; all with outstretched hands giving him welcome to the regions of endless night.

A Woman in the Office (613).

A clean-minded young college man was given charge of the work of purchasing small supplies for a concern in the Middle West. All day long there passed through his office a stream of salesmen. Most of them were fellows of intelligence, dignity and clean conversation. But a certain portion had false conceptions of selling methods, and resorted to familiarity and vulgar stories. The tone of the office seemed to be getting lower and lower when the young man had been there several weeks. The vulgar and profane elements among his visitors were not only distasteful to him but stayed longer than was necessary for the transaction of business, and took up his time.

Matters were apparently getting beyond his control altogether when he followed a tip dropped by an older man, and had his stenographer's

desk moved into the same room with his own. Immediately the whole situation changed. Visitors had to talk within earshot of a young woman. Profanity and vulgarity ceased automatically. The tone of the place was raised to a decent level. Discussion was held so strictly to business details that the time given to salesmen every day was cut squarely in half.—Selected.

Influence (614).

A man may be persuaded to shame or glory, as the case may be, by the example of his neighbor. One person afflicted by blinding fear may turn a hundred men into a panic-stricken mob or he may convert them into a throng of heroes through their very horror of his conduct. And one man who has established his moral equilibrium quickly can instantly convey fortitude to the others. Courage and cowardice both like company.—Selected.

Character's Enchantment (615).

There is always a certain amount of enchantment about a beautiful character. We all know what it is to meet those whose quality and beauty of character we admire and esteem. How it thrills us with the dignity of its gracious mystery, its rare, delicate sympathy, its natural charm. Everyone in this transitory life of ours has in his or her mind the ideal of what he or she would like to be, and the loftier and nobler the ideal, the more godlike will the character become. Each character, with its beautiful thoughts and beautiful actions, is an exquisite proof, a living, practical witness on earth of the power and glory of God.

What are the effects of a strong and beautiful character upon those with whom it comes in contact? In the first place, the divine inspiration which it continually inspires in the hearts of others toward the love of moral beauty. In the second place, the example of such a character, with its tremendous influences for good, which cannot be overestimated. It shines forth with radiant beauty like some bright serene star, guiding with the glory of its light the footsteps of wanderers, lest peradventure they stumble through the darkness of the world.—Selected.

LXXX. SANCTIFIED TRIALS.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure . . . there was given to me a thorn in the flesh . . . My grace is sufficient for thee."—2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Frank B. McAllister, in The Congregationalist, treats this theme as follows: On old Spanish coins may be seen the pillars of Hercules with the motto surrounding them, "Ne plus ultra," that is, "nothing beyond." When these coins were struck, Spain owned both sides of the Mediterranean and imagined there was no hand beyond the waste of water stretched westward. There came a day, however, when a Genoese sailor pointed his little fleet of caravels toward the sunset and left leagues of blue water behind him. Coming finally upon a new world, he forced Spain to revise the old inscription. The pillars of Hercules were retained, and the "plus ultra," but the "ne" was omitted. For Spain had found that "beyond" there was more than the imagination of man had dreamed.

We often write the old motto on experiences in our lives that seem final. It may be either some loss sustained or some goal reached that has the effect of a damper on aspiration for the future. Through good fortune or through ill, men reach the point where they assume that there is nothing beyond. They have come to the confines of their world.

Distressing loss often has that effect. One loses his health or his money or his reputation and concludes that there is nothing left for him in life. He has reached the limits both of desire and of duty. Any possible beyond seems like a barren waste.

II. Personal sorrows are not infrequently pillars of Hercules beyond which the voyager on life's ocean will not venture. The passing out of our circle, for instance, of some personality that has meant companionship and happiness seems to put up the bars against us. We see nothing ahead that is pleasant or desirable. The Israelites of old, led captive across the desert, felt that their national existence was at an end. They hung their harps on the willows and refused to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. Not otherwise men and women everywhere, in the presence of those tragedies of which life is full, feel that the music, buoyancy and delight of existence are clean gone forever.

III. It is useful at such times to reflect that the march of the years may still bring us gifts that we have never suspected could come our way. Columbus, on his weary voyage, must often have concluded that the old motto was right after all, and that there was nothing beyond the horizon when one day there swung out of the mist a whole new hemisphere. Similarly people often find a delight in work and a joy in companionship that almost surprise them after losses that have shattered life to its foundations. It is a sane and right hope that, in the providence of God, life should continue to be interesting and useful to the end.

IV. This present life itself is only a preparation. It is only the vestibule to the temple that shall one day be revealed. Let the outlook be extended beyond this narrow spot that men call earth.

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I. Thorns in nature serve a purpose, and there is a reason for them in life. Trials are often blessings in disguise. The thorn in St. Paul's life was doubtless the Lord's method of preventing over-exaltation in the case of this highly-favored apostle. The way St. Paul managed the trial is instructive, for the answer to his three-fold prayer was: "My grace is sufficient for thee;" then, losing the desire to get rid of the infirmity, a wonderful change is wrought in him, and that which had been a matter of sorrow now became a matter of rejoicing, and he says: "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

II. The uses of affliction become clearly apparent. The epicurean principle is, "Flee from pain;" the stoical one, "Ignore pain;" while the Christian method is, "Use pain." For five years after the ascension of Christ the little church was content to remain in Judea, and no Gentiles were in its membership, and little effort was made to evangelize the nations, until persecution scattered them and set them to work. A little child suffering in a well-lighted room called her mother to turn on the dark. Many a one in the light of prosperity is ignoble and selfish, but generous and worthy when a wise hand turns on the dark.

III. Where there is suffering there is consolation, and where there is consolation there is divine grace. How very wonderful the declaration in the second Corinthian Letter that God's grace is sufficient for us, this love and favor and good-will of God towards us, and this good work of God in us!—Selected.

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Pain should be a great uniting element in human life. A full and unbroken prosperity makes for disunion. A rough and gloomy experience calls out the compassion that is in human hearts. It is the great awakener of human sympathy and kindness. Of this the world is full, and, perhaps, more full than ever. We need not try to exaggerate the claim of Christianity in this respect. It is admitted that Christianity has remodeled the treatment of suffering and helplessness. Hospitals are still largely the outcome of Christian faith. The heart of Christ was the great fountain of sympathy with suffering, and his compassion for all in pain has overflowed into many hearts that do not own him as Master. That we are all members one of another, is a truth never so fully and keenly felt as after long suffering, provided that suffering has brought us new and near ties. It is necessary to lay stress upon this. Suffering by itself tends to harden, and, to soften, counteracting influences must work. Very often, while relieving pain, we do more than we think. We enable the sufferer to rise from the signs of true human life to the tokens and witnesses of a divine love. To be suffering, and to be neglected at the same time, is to have a veil interposed not only between man and man, but between man and God. The result must too often be to harden and estrange. But if the moral end of suffering be largely its influence upon the heart in humanizing it, then the loving relief of suffering and

its faithful attendance may bring the sorely-tried heart nearer to God and his Christ and his grace.

II. If pain often unites man to man, so it often begins and perfects the union of man to God. It teaches fortitude and resignation. It will not teach us these unless God himself is with us while we suffer. There is a submission which is not fatalism. There is a brave endurance which is not callousness. Fatalism is abhorrent to Christianity, but patience is not. It is, on the contrary, a beautiful Christian virtue. It ascends into regions beyond our view, for there have been those who trusted God while he slew them. There is a loftier height. "I, John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus." The patience that is in Jesus often brings believing hearts into the highest experiences of the mystical union.—British Weekly.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Why? (616)

A gentleman, whose daughter had long been sick, had bought for her birthday present a beautiful goblet of fine glass. It was as clear as crystal and of most exquisite modeling, and to make it quite perfect he wanted the daughter's name engraved upon it, and he had brought it to the workman for that purpose. The man took the delicate glass in his hands, and laid it against a swiftly revolving emery-wheel, and as he turned it to and fro, to bring out the inscription, the drip and sand accumulated upon it till it looked as if it had been rolled in mud. He held the goblet firmly to its place, crowded it hard, first upon a larger wheel and then upon a smaller one till it seemed as if the fragile thing would go into a thousand pieces. After half an hour of this rough work at last the glass was carefully lifted and its bright surface rubbed clean; then the engraving stood out, every stroke perfect; and, surrounded by a wreath of roses, in beautiful old English letters appeared the child's name. If that glass had been conscious it might have asked, "Why must I, above all others, be ground and cut in this way?" The answer would have been, "In order that nothing might be lacking to your beauty and to my dear child's joy, I brought you here and had you put on this wheel and engraved with her name; the process was not pleasant, but it has made you sacred in my eyes forever." So, my brethren, does God sometimes grind and cut a delicate soul. The process is painful and while it is going on it seems perhaps rather defiling than beautifying, but when it is ended there stands "a name which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."—Samuel D. Campbell, D.D.

The Uses of Adversity (617).

The Farm and Fireside thus shows how the great pest, the boll-weevil, has been of advantage to the South: The people of the South are likely to forget how much in the way of blessing they owe to the boll-weevil. Congress appropriated money to the Department of Agriculture to use in devising ways to circumvent the pest; and the late Doctor Knapp, seeing no way to do this except by successful mixed farming, used the money, and every other cent he could get, in showing the southern farmers how to grow cotton and corn. Out of this grew the great United

States Co-operative Demonstration Work of the Bureau of Plant Industry—and the dawn of a new day for the South.

The Bureau has 32 negro demonstrators at work, who have enrolled about 4,000 negro farmers as co-operators. There are numerous negro farmers enrolled under white demonstrators. The Department estimates that 25,000 negro co-operators were reached directly and indirectly by its work in one season. No one can estimate the benefit to the nation and to the South of this work among the blacks. So good came out of evil.

We Need Our Crosses (618).

We have need of all our crosses. When we suffer much, it is because we have strong ties that it is necessary to loosen. We resist, and we thus retard the divine operation; we repulse the heavenly hand, and it must come again. It would be wiser to yield ourselves at once to God. That the operation of his providence which overthrows our self-love should not be painful to us would require the intervention of a miracle. Would it be less miraculous that a soul, absorbed in its own concerns, should in a moment become dead itself than that a child should go to sleep a child and wake up a man?—Fenelon.

Life's Handicaps (620).

A young man complained to his minister some time ago that it was of no use to talk to him about college and training for a life work and all that—he had never had half a chance in his life and never expected to have. The boy's father was dead—he had been a drunkard. As the oldest of the family, this son had been his mother's mainstay since he was old enough to know the family troubles. He had no thought of leaving her to fend alone, and no wish to do so. But an ingrained bitterness and discouragement revealed itself in that night's talk, and the old minister set himself to root it out and conquer it.

"No use!" the boy repeated; "I have tried. I've studied a lot nights all by myself. But it's like working with one hand, and you can't do anything that way."

"Yes, you can!" insisted the minister. "My boy, half the best work in the world has been done with one hand. The world's masterpieces have often been done under a handicap. Fight for your mother and the rest of them with one hand, but use that free hand to do your own work with."

Patience (621).

To be hindered in the work and yet not be impatient with God's way or doubtful that the work is going on—that was the exile's problem on the little dry island of Patmos. And it has been the problem of many a man who was tempted to think himself forsaken ever since.—Hilton Jones.

LXXXI. THE LIFE IN CHRIST.

¶ I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.—Galatians 2:20.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Some of the special blessings and privileges of this life in Christ are set forth by Rev. James Robertson, D.D., as follows:

I. There is the great blessing of the Father's keeping, which Jesus asks for his disciples with urgency, on account of their exposure in a hostile world—"Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me;" "I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one."—John 17:11, 15.

II. There is the Father's sanctifying, or more exactly, his consecrating of the disciples of Jesus to their work for him in the world, so that, renouncing self-gratification, they may be entirely devoted to it—"Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth," John 17:17-19.

III. There is the Father's discipline, which comes through the word of Jesus, and, when more is needful, through affliction experienced in the natural life, and checking the carnal will. "My Father is the husbandman . . . . every branch (in me) that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit," John 15: 1, 2.

IV. There is the shepherd-care of Jesus, who intimately knows his flock, guides each one of them, and will suffer none of them to perish—"He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out;" "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand," John 10:3, 27, 28.

V. There is the fellowship with the Father and the Son promised in the words, "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John 14:23.

VI. There is the fellowship of believers with one another for which Jesus prays, "that they may all be one," John 17:21.

VII. There is the answering of all prayer in the name of Jesus—that is to say, offered in the faith revealed by Jesus, and so truly prompted by the Spirit whom he sends that he himself speaks in it, and we speak in his name—"I chose you . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you," John 15:16. See also 14:13, 14; 16:23-26; Mark 11:24.

VIII. There is the blessing that comes of being occupied, like Jesus, in the service of man—"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do: because I

go unto the Father," John 16:12. "He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts 20:35.

IX. Other great blessings, which may be regarded as all consequent on the gift and possession of divine life are freedom, rest, peace, and full satisfaction of the heart's aspirations. Life and light are closely connected. It was so in the creation of men, as St. John says, "The life was the light of men," 1:4. So from the divine life which Jesus came from heaven to give, an inner light springs up. Whoever receives the life has also moral and spiritual light, which grows in clearness with the growth of the life. This light agrees and coincides with what Jesus calls "the truth," and of which he says, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8:32.

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Rev. B. S. Crosby, in preaching on this text, used this line of thought:

I. Christianity is a life opposed to creed or form. Christianity is far more than simply a well-ordered moral life. It is gospel truth inwrought by the Holy Spirit into the life, so that it becomes a vital principle of thought, or purpose, and action. This is the life that constitutes one a Christian. Creeds are no more Christianity than Euclid is mathematics, or botany, plant life. A man may subscribe to the best and fullest creed, and yet not be a Christian.

II. Christianity is a life not dependent on feeling, which is often evanescent, and often without adequate cause.

III. This life begins in the soul, here and now. We do not wait to reach the after-death world to realize it. It is the life which I now live in the flesh. We enter into it in this world. It is a historic life, a life which makes history. It is the spirit and spring of progress. It inspires to noble and worthy ambitions, that advance and rise, and lift society up to higher planes. It has tongues that speak, and pens that write, and hands that are skillful to execute, and hearts that love and aspire toward God. It blesses and uplifts the world in its advancing and upward movement. It brings to view facts and principles which otherwise we could not see and know.

IV. It is thus a life of faith. The method by which this life is attained is suggested: "I live by the faith of God." This faith is both subjective and objective. It proceeds from the indwelling Christ and is therefore a grace. Thus it quickens the mind and moves the heart to harmonious thought and right conception of truth, and constitutes spiritual exercise, and is thus a virtue, so that faith is the spirit and spring of the Christian's life.

V. This life is the outcome of God's love. A life of love has God in it. "This is my life," the mother says, as she presses her nursling to her heart. A life which is born of love has the permanence of the Christ, who is life and thus lives in us.

* * *

Bishop H. W. Warren in preaching on this theme, gave the following inspiring unfolding of the truth:

I. Christ in you. This is perfectly natural. Christ made all things, and without him was not anything made that was made. Science has

bidden good-by to the idea of an endowed universe and to an absentee God, and has come to the clear conviction of an immanent God. In making even such a thing as an apple nature first makes a little wooden wire, mere wood; through it flows the most beautiful baby clothes; O, the beautiful fragrant swaddling bands of coming fruit; through the same wire flows five seed cups enclosed in a sort of leather, and then in the seed cups seeds of life for a dozen more trees and millions of more apples, and then food compared with which the apples of the Hesperides are mere sawdust— nectar fit for the gods, enclosed in a seamless bag, and then when complete this wooden wire grows just apart and drops the apple into your hand. No, God maketh the grass to grow and he, immanent, takes care of nature, and much more will he dwell in genial human hearts. "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus," and Paul bows his knees in the dungeon for his Ephesian Church and says: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he will grant you, according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened—" how much? "According to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his spirit with might in the inner man in order that Christ may dwell in your hearts."

II. It is not only urged upon us, but is promised. "If any man love me he will keep my words and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Christ in you! Paul said: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, and yet not I but Christ liveth in me," and then he frequently exhorts his people far and wide to seek that same glorious experience, that they all may share the infinite joy, uplift and power that the apostle to the Gentiles had. It is entirely natural for Christ to dwell in us and play on the high possibilities of our being. There is an organ; it is a wonderful bit of machinery; a child that knows nothing of it may make a noise on it, jargon, discord, but let Gounod sit at the keyboard and the raptures and trumpets of the Reformation fall upon the ear. Let Handel sit there and the glory of the "Hallelujah Chorus" fills all hearts and subdues all souls. Viewed as a machine, man is more wonderful than any which man has made, for God made you, and made your bodies to be a temple, fit for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. You may play on the possibilities of your being like a child; you can feel the sounds and discords. But let God sit at the keyboard of your being, and then shall his thought roll as music to fill the world. One who has dwelt in the Spirit of Christ said, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." As a result, he had great peace.

III. That is Christ's final legacy. Not as the world giveth, lands, money, property, incumbrance, but "My peace unto you." A woman, high spirited, if anyone lifts a threatening finger, towers into indignation. She is a mother. She is undisturbed and her peace unruffled, though her child howls, and wails, and kicks, and smites her in the face with its puny fist. She sings and coos and soothes the child to sleep upon her peaceful bosom. Christ is peace. He was reviled of men. They bowed at his feet in pretended worship; they smote him with the palms of their hands; they spit in his face; they nailed him to the cross. But his peace was undisturbed; and the only sound that flowed out of his lips was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." His peace in you brings the

same result. In your Church your plans may be set aside; other leaders may come to the front; words may be spoken contrary to your wishes and will there. "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth"—but my peace, the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

IV. This man who had Christ dwelling in him received divine guidance. He had been through Phrygia and Galatia, and desired to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Christ which was in him suffered him not, but brought him to the sound that separated Asia and Europe and carried him over by a straight course, not drifting and tacking before contrary winds; and all Europe and we heard the gospel thereby. Divine guidance! Have you been guided? Have you been kept from Bithynia? Have you been sent to this man, that man, and the other?

V. Then beside guidance he received power. He needed it. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and day I have been in the deep." "Why do you not quit, and go home to your beloved Tarsus, and walk its academic gardens? Why not?" "Because the love of Christ constrains me." Christ in you! The love of Christ constrains the sacrifice. Do you not know that these old Bible scenes are not meant to be simply impossibilities to modern life? All these things happened for ensample, and they were written for our admonition. I never was one who believed that the glory of the race was in the beginning. God's great stream of development on to eternity did not begin greatest in the early ages, and will not dwindle away to nothing in the end. It grows! These things of Paul and Samuel were given for ensample—and written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the earth have come. Wesley had Christ in him as surely as Paul. He might have spent his life in the quiet elegance of a cloister, but he was to preach the gospel of Christ as a living experience to the world.

Moody once heard a man say that the reason all the world was not converted was because Christ could not find men in whom he could work his will; and Moody said, "Well, here will be one man hereafter in whom Christ can work his will, and that is Moody." As a result, see him, the great evangelist, passing through all the English-speaking land, with thousands upon thousands hearing him. O let Christ be in you. Let him work his will in you through the glorious fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that all lives may be touched by the power of the living Christ. So shall the Church forge on under God's guidance into greater and more glorious power.

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Luther's comment on this text was: Now, because Christ liveth in me, therefore look what grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation are in me; all this is his, and yet, notwithstanding, the same is mine also, by that inseparable union and conjunction which is through faith, by which Christ and I are made, as it were, one body in spirit.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Christ Liveth In Me (622).

Happy he who can feel God with his soul as keenly and as really as he feels the air with his body. Thrice happy he who has so vivid a sense of the actual personal presence of his Saviour that he walks with him and

talks to him more intimately and constantly than with any earthly friend. It can be done. It may grow by cultivation to be the greatest power of one's days, the sweetest refreshment of one's nights. It will diffuse a mighty influence continually through the heart and through the life. There need be no vehemence or strain about it, no bondage as of a painful task, yet, of course, it is not without effort, for distractions are many, interruptions almost constant. The sense of God's nearness cannot act with equal intensity or be equally vivid in consciousness at all times; it cannot be absolutely uninterrupted. The law of healthful feeling demands changes. We are not to condemn ourselves when necessary business requires, for a season, our close, exclusive attention. Nevertheless, there may be that habitual spring and swing of the soul Godward which will send it swiftly back to him whenever the restraint of pressure is removed; a steadily increasing bent in that direction, displacing the bent earthward and sinward which makes us in our unregenerate state, and even in the early stages of our discipleship so "prone to wander." This habit is not to be reached by any easy or royal road of quick obtaining; it comes by patient practice.

Why do the poets, beginning with the psalmist, speak so much of "the secret of his presence," "the secret place of the Most High?" Chiefly, we think, because the believer so constantly baffles his pursuers, or oppressors and assailants, by retiring within this unseen fortress, the key to which they cannot discover. He is safely hidden from all alarms, all woes, all foes. His entire deliverance from the strife of tongues and the fear of men, his composure under their taunts and threats, his peace amid the storm, his brightness in the gloom, is an impenetrable mystery to them. With this "secret of the Lord" they cannot meddle; it mocks them and puzzles them; it foils and frustrates all their schemes. How sweet and unbroken the rest when our Saviour is our keeper, keeping us and ours in his strong pavilion!—From "The Riches of His Grace."

The Soul's Divine Tenant (623).

He will come into the solitude in which the soul dwells, and make the darkness bright with his presence, and break the monotonous silence with words of love. We have him only to speak to: he alone can understand us. He will rejoice with us when we rejoice, and weep with us when we weep. The heart knoweth its own bitterness; God knows it, too; and though a stranger can not intermeddle with its joy, he, whose temple and dwelling place is the soul that loves him, is no stranger, but the soul's most intimate and only friend.—R. W. Dale.

The Personal Christ (624).

There is no more futile waste of breath than that of teachers of morality, who have no message but Be good! Be good! and no motive by which to urge it but the pleasures of virtue and the disadvantages of vice. When the vagueness of the abstract thought of goodness solidifies into a living Person and that Person makes his appeal first to our hearts and bids us love him, and then opens before us the unstained light of his own character and beseeches us to be like him, the repellent becomes attractive; the impossible becomes possible, and "if ye love Me keep My commandments" becomes a constraining power and a victorious impulse in our lives.—Alexander Maclaren.

Christ Within the Life (625).

When Saul of Tarsus heard the Master's call, he cried out, "Who art thou, Lord?" and, as he opened the door, a heavenly radiance filled the room, where Jesus became enthroned—the murderer was transformed into a saint.

Jerry McAuley was changed from a river thief into an evangel of love to lost comrades.

Samuel H. Hadley, catching a glimpse of the Saviour, was lifted from the gutter into the leadership of the religious forces of a great city

When the Salvation Army led a brutish, ignorant man from the slums of London to Christ, an old comrade asked him, saying "Who was the father of Jesus? Where did Jesus live? When did he live and how did he die?" "I don't know," replied the new convert. "What do you know?" said the questioner. Then, with face beaming with joy, he exclaimed, "I know that he saved me."

The most distinguished and learned minds have found Christ through this soul sense of personal consciousness. Dr. Horace Bushnell once said: "I know Jesus Christ better than I know any man in Hartford, and I think if he came along here he would arrest himself and say, 'Here's a man I know.'" Phillips Brooks once testified, "I know Jesus and he knows me, and we walk together, face to face."

God has given to man a spiritual sense—a sixth sense, by which the soul becomes conscious of divine things. It was by this religious consciousness that the child Samuel heard the voice of God. By this "inner light" David felt the horror of his sin and the joy of forgiveness. In this holy of holies of the soul,

"Closer is he than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet"

Until Helen Keller was seven years old her teachers had given her no religious instruction. When she reached the age of twelve years, Phillips Brooks began to tell her about God, what he had done, how he had loved men and what he is to us. The deaf, dumb and blind child listened intently, as her teacher interpreted Mr. Brooks' words, when she said, "Mr. Brooks, I knew all this before, but I didn't know his name."—Rev. Edwin Whittier Caswell.

LXXXII. BURDEN BEARING.

"Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ."—Galatians 6:2.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. J. H. Jowett followed these lines in developing this text: Burdened people in old Rome were carrying just the same load as burdened people are carrying through our streets today. The burden may have a somewhat different covering, but strip it of its wrappings and you will find it the same. Everybody who walked through the streets of old Rome carried a burden, as does everyone walking through the streets of our city today, and, therefore, I say, the old letter is as fresh as the morning's post, and the counsel of the apostle is a newly-spoken word from the Lord of Light and Grace. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Now I want to ask you to undo with me a few of those burdens and look at them, and give them a name, and then see what we can do to help one another to bear them.

I. I will begin with the commonest burden to be found in the world, the burden of sin.

Now, what is sin? Sin is the revolt against the holy sovereignty of God, and surrender and homage and allegiance to the enemy of God. Sin is essentially a change of flag, a deliberate desertion of one flag to march under another flag. Everyone here knows that the wide gate is always the portal of servitude. There is no exception. Let a man try to get out of that iron wide gate and he will find that it is as cramped and narrow as the gate of the innermost cell of the old bastile. Sin is revolt, and sin is servitude. Bear ye one another's burdens? My brethren, what can we do for one another in regard to this burden of sin? The only thing we can do with people who are thus burdened with the guilt of their old sins is to bring them to the Saviour of the World, we can do nothing but bring them to the old fountain "opened for sin and uncleanness." We can begin to lift a man's burden by bringing him to the Master, who can take away his sins. It is a glorious sharing of the burden. We can do it by counsel, and by gentle guidance, and by mighty intercession.

II. Now there is another burden, also found in New York, Galatia and ancient Rome—I will call it the burden of Temperament. What I mean is this: That even when a man has found Christ, even when his sin has been forgiven, even when the great renewal has taken place, the man has still to work out his own salvation. When the seed of regeneration has been imparted by the good God, that seed is to be nourished and matured, and it is to be matured amid the special constitutional conditions of the individual life. Conversion does not annihilate temperament. Every regenerated man has to fight the good fight of faith, and his warfare is determined for him by the peculiarity of his own mental and moral constitution.

"Bear ye one another's burdens." Can we do it? I think we can. We can help the man with the temperament like a powder magazine into mastery or send him into servitude; we can sling lighted matches round about his magazine, or we can spread cooling influences over his soul. We can take sides with the devil or with the angels. This means to help one another in the carrying of temperamental burdens; to consider and steady one another from the standpoint of chivalry in the Christian life, and to determine that, by our conduct and demeanor, we will help our brother to triumph in the realm of grace and hope, just as Greatheart in the Pilgrim's Progress helped Mr. Feeblemind, Mr. Ready-to-Halt, Miss Muchafraid and others, until all reached the Heavenly Country, the fragrant land where bloomed the lily of eternal peace.

III. A third burden, found everywhere, is the burden of incompleteness. What I mean is this: No man is an integer; every man is a fraction. The New Testament teaches that no man is the body, but every man is a limb. Everybody is incomplete, gloriously, graciously incomplete; and our gaps are to be filled up with one another's fullness. So you see the consolidarity of the race is to be made up of the fellowship of incompleteness—human fragments bound together in the wholeness and holiness of comradeship and grace.

Now, it is the loving design of God that we surrender ourselves to one another. If one is a lock, another a key, one a reed and another a breeze, we are bound to come together. We need one another, and without one another we shall be heavily laden; and to live a selfish, self-centered and exclusive life is to rob humanity of its due, and to dwarf and impoverish and sterilize oneself. "Bear ye one another's burdens."

IV. The streets of the world are filled with burdened people, wounded people, sore people; and people are often sorest and most burdened who keep a smiling face. And so it behooves us to put away all brusqueness and thoughtless speaking and move about with care among our burdened fellows. But everybody says, "Have I always to be on my guard?" Well, why not? If you were to move about in a hospital, among broken bodies, you would be on your guard. Nurses have to be on their guard always, and if we have to walk tenderly and circumspectly among broken bodies, why not among oppressed and broken souls? It was Christ's way, and you will find him under the burden that you try to raise up. Some have never found Christ because they have never looked for him in the right place. I will tell you where you will surely find him. Find out somebody who is burdened. Put your back beneath his load and you will know that the Saviour is there. I never knew it to fail. He bore our griefs and he carried our sorrows, and he is carrying them still, and if you want to be near him get under the burden and you will find him there.

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Dr. William G. McCready concluded a sermon on this topic in these words: Now, as to our personal responsibility in the matter. The greatest character in modern fiction is Victor Hugo's Bishop of A. In spite of the traditions of luxury, he chose a life of simplicity. He be-

friends a thief who makes way with his silverware and is caught. When the police return with him to the Bishop, he bids them loose him and tells the thief to take the silver and make a man of himself. The French laws were harsh in their treatment of felons. In the midst of such environment the Bishop stands out as the embodiment of gentleness and love. To him humanity was God-like. On man's brow was written hope, and in his heart, love. Man was God's child. Man was weak, but God was strong. Man's variability toward God was in constant contrast to God's unchangeableness and love toward man.

The Bishop had a vision. He looked up through man to God. He determined to show the thief that he had caught the Spirit of God. Find your neighbor and minister unto him. Let us each have our vision of God and let us follow it where it leads.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

"I'll See You Over" (626).

The 5 o'clock rush was swelling the crowd on the main business thoroughfare of a big city one afternoon. Perhaps it was because of an approaching storm; perhaps it was because of that inward blindness which comes with self-centered thoughts; perhaps it was only because of eagerness to get home, that among all those quick-treading feet none was arrested at the sight of a poorly clad young man standing hesitant on the curb at the intersection of two streets. The crowd hurried past unheeding. This young fellow stared with sightless eyes across the street whose turmoil he dared not invade unaided.

As he stood there, tapping the curb gropingly with his cane, a tall, rugged-looking man came swinging across the street. He spied the blind man, faltering and timid in his helplessness, and without an instant's hesitation stepped up to the young fellow and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"It's all right, brother," he said. "I'll see you over," And taking the man by the arm, he piloted him through the throng.

There is always someone who must be "helped over;" and not while one single human need remains untouched may we lay aside our task, nay, our privilege, of helpfulness.—The Continent.

"If You Can't Smile" (627).

In the vestibule of a certain hospital visitors see a card bearing this advice: "Never utter a discouraging word while you are in this hospital. You should come here only for the purpose of helping. Keep your hindering, sad looks for other places; and if you can't smile, don't go in."

"If you can't smile don't go in!" It is good advice for others than hospital visitors. Who is beyond the ministry of a kindly smile?—East and West.

Gracious Ministries (628).

It was a blustery, dreary, cold November day. Outside of a restaurant, on a busy street, an old lady stood with her hand outstretched asking for alms. Her clothes were poor and the hand outheld was twisted and blue from exposure. A few, a very few, stopped and dropped a coin into the old wrinkled hand. A young girl about seven-

teen came down the street. She was neatly but not richly dressed, a type of the many girls who work in the stores near by. The old woman held out her hand. The young girl stopped and shook her head. It told the onlookers as plain as words, "I have no money;" and then she noticed the bare, twisted and cold hands. Without a moment's hesitation she drew off her woolen gloves, gave them to the old woman and passed on, and as she passed on, in her eyes was a new light.—Selected.

A Refuge for the Troubled (629).

Here and there, all too rarely, we find men and women who are as a refuge to those in trouble. I have in mind now a minister to whom men in trouble come, not because they are members of his church or live in his neighborhood, not because he is a minister, but because he has a warm heart and a sympathetic ear, because they feel that somehow he understands their problems and does care. They come in the distress of their sins and tell him frankly how they feel, not as to a confessor, but as to a brother. He never betrays their confidences and rarely fails to help them. He does not do it by preaching, but by entering into their troubles in the Christlike spirit of brotherhood, recognizing the passions of men, and that there is more hope for the man who means well, but falls, because temptations have been too strong for the flesh, than for the man who professes goodness and, with deliberate meanness, cheats, wrongs and defames others.—Selected.

"Boosting" (630).

On Sunday, October 26th, 1823, the annual sermon for the Missionary Union was preached in Boston by a young man from the text "The field is the world." The weather was stormy and cold; the audience small and without enthusiasm. The next day the young preacher went to Dr. Wisner's home and threw himself on a sofa in one of his most despondent moods. Speaking of his discourse of the previous evening, he declared it a "complete failure that fell dead." But there was one hearer, Deacon Loring, who said a good word for the sermon and printed and distributed it. That single boost lifted the young preacher to the very top as a scholar, and the discourse was hailed with delight by Christians of all denominations at home and abroad, immortalizing the "Moral Dignity" of the Missionary Enterprise and laying the foundation for the usefulness and popularity of the learned and renowned Francis Wayland, President of Brown University.—Selected.

The Burden of Guilt (631).

No man can touch the burden of his brother's guilt. No man can go back into another man's yesterdays and put the crooked straight. When Judas had betrayed Christ and saw he was condemned he brought back the thirty pieces of silver, saying, "I have betrayed innocent blood." What can you do for that man's guilt? You cannot touch it. Here is an instance from secular literature, that marvelous and mighty and almost inhuman play of "Macbeth." When Macbeth had murdered Duncan he suffered from a "sleepless sting." He says: "Whence is that knocking? How is it with me, when every voice appalls me? What hands are here?" What can you do with that? You cannot touch it. A

more powerful illustration is Lady Macbeth, wandering at night through the halls of Dunsinane Castle after the murder, holding out her hands. She cries: "Here is the smell of the blood still, all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!" And the doctor said: "This disease is beyond my practice," and a little later he adds: "More needs she the divine than the physician."—Jowett.

Sympathy (632).

I am the voice of the helpless,
  I am the friend of the weak;
I am the simple music
  The lips of the tender speak.
I am the rose, where roses
  Are scarcer than many know;
I am the feet that travel
  Where proud feet never go.

I am the right that enters
  The ring to cope with wrong;
I am the gentle message,
  I am the soothing song,
I am the constant comrade
  Of friendless hearts and sad;
I am the light that scatters
  The shadows murk and mad.

I am the courage bringer,
  I am the one who bears
Comfort to hearts that suffer,
  Healing to countless cares.
I am the cry that wakens
  The soul of the roaring time
Till it turns in its endless pity
  To banish the social crime.

I am the human chorus
  That rises unto the stars
Out of the flying ages,
  Breaking the prison bars.
I am the sunlight dancing
  Down into hearts of grief;
I am the strength and reason
  For all divine belief.

—Baltimore Sun.

Rules for Making Sunshine (633).

When you rise in the morning, form a resolution to make the day a happy one to a fellow creature. It is easily done; a left-off garment to a man who needs it, a kind word to the sorrowful, an encouraging expression to the striving, trifles in themselves, light as air, will do it, at least for the twenty-four hours. You send one person, only one,

happy through the day—that is three hundred and sixty-five during the course of the year; and suppose you live only forty years after you commence that practice, you have made fourteen thousand six hundred human beings happy at all events for a time. Now, is not this simple? it is too short for a sermon, too homely for ethics, too easily accomplished for you to say, "I would if I could."—Sydney Smith.

LXXXIII. THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Galatians 6:7, 8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

The great English preacher, Rev. Frederick W. Robertson, used the following plan in presenting the truth of these verses: There is a close analogy between the world of nature and the world of spirit. They bear the impress of the same hand; and hence the principles of nature and its laws are the types and shadows of the Invisible. The worlds visible and invisible are two books, written by the same finger, and governed by the same Idea. Or, rather, they are but one Book, separated into two only by the narrow range of our ken. For it is impossible to study the universe at all without perceiving that it is one system. Begin with what science you will, as soon as you get beyond the rudiments, you are constrained to associate it with another. As tare-seed comes up tares, and wheat-seed wheat, and as the crop in both cases is in proportion to two conditions, the labor and the quantity committed to the ground—so in things spiritual, too, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Not something else, but "that." The proportion holds in kind; it holds too in degree, in spiritual things as in natural. "He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." If we could understand and rightly expound that principle, we should be saved from much of the disappointment and surprise which come from extravagant and unreasonable expectations.

I. The Principle: "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

There are two kinds of good possible to men—one enjoyed by our animal being, the other felt and enjoyed by our spirit.

II. The Applications of the Principle: 1. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." There are two kinds of life: one of the flesh—another of the Spirit. Amidst the animal and selfish desires of our natures there is a voice which clearly speaks of duty, right, perfection. This is the Spirit of Deity in man; it is the life of God in the soul. This is the evidence of our Divine parentage.

But there is a double temptation to live the lower life instead of this. a. The desires of our animal nature are keener than those of our spiritual. The cry of Passion is louder than the calm voice of Duty. b. The reward is given sooner. It takes a less time to amass a fortune than to become heavenly-minded. It costs less to indulge an appetite than it does to gain the peace of lulled passion. And hence, when men feel that, for the spiritual blessing, the bread must be cast upon the waters, which shall not be found until after many days (skepticism whispers, "never!"), it is quite intelligible why they choose the visible and palpable instead of the invisible advantage, and plan for an immediate har-

vest rather than a distant one.

The lower life is that of the flesh. The "flesh" includes all the desires of our unrenewed nature—the harmless as well as sinful. Any labor, therefore, which is bounded by present well-being, is sowing to the flesh, whether it be the gratification of an immediate impulse, or the long-contrived plan, reaching forward over many years.

2. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." What is meant by sowing to the Spirit here is plain. "Let us not be weary in well-doing," says the apostle directly after: "for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Well-doing: not faith, but works of goodness, were the sowing that he spoke of.

There is proclaimed here the rewardableness of works. So in many other passages: "Abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."—"Laying up a good foundation for the time to come," was the reason alleged for charging rich men to be willing to give—and so all through. There is an irreversible principle. The amount of harvest is proportioned to the seed sown.

III. The Harvest. 1. The harvest is Life Eternal. But eternal life here does not simply mean a life that lasts forever. That is the destiny of the Soul: all souls, bad as well as good. But the bad do not enter into this "eternal life." It is not simply the duration, but the quality of the life, which constitutes its character of eternal. A spirit may live forever, yet not enter into this. And a man live but for five minutes the life of Divine benevolence, or desire for perfectness: in those five minutes he has entered into the life which is eternal, never fluctuates, but is the same unalterably forever, in the life of God. This is the reward.

2. The reward is not arbitrary, but natural. God's rewards and God's punishments are all natural. Distinguish between arbitrary and natural. Death is an arbitrary punishment for forgery: it might be changed for transportation. It is not naturally connected. It depends upon the will of the lawmaker. But trembling nerves are the direct and the natural results of intemperance. They are, in the order of nature, the results of wrong-doing. The man reaps what he has sown. Similarly in rewards. If God gave riches in return for humbleness, that would be an arbitrary connection. He did give such a reward to Solomon. But when he gives life eternal, meaning by life eternal, not duration of existence, but heavenly quality of existence, as explained already, it is all natural. The seed sown in the ground contains in itself the future harvest. The harvest is but the development of the germ of life in the seed. A holy act strengthens the inward holiness. It is a seed of life, growing into more life.

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Mr. Moody divided this text as follows:

1. No man sows without expecting to reap.
2. He expects to reap the same kind that he sows.
3. He expects to reap far more than he sows.
4. He will reap in kind and quality as he sows; no matter what he thinks.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Justice (634).

Wandering in the darkness one is almost sure to come around by-and-by to the very place where he started.

In the days of old, a Scotchman did an awful deed in the castle of a nobleman. In the dead of night he mounted a horse and set out to flee from the vengeance which he knew would pursue him. All night long he pressed on through the woods, thinking that every step was taking him farther from justice. But when the gray light of morning broke he was horrified to find that his way had brought him back to the very castle from which he had fled. He was discovered, captured and condemned to death.

There is no way of escaping the consequences of sin. Flee as far as we may, the road will always lead back to the awful deed we have done. The penalty must be paid, sometime, somehow.

"No one will ever know it if I do this thing!"

Many a man has said this and thought he was telling the truth. The thing he planned to do may have seemed to him small at the time. That is the devil's way to make sin seem of no moment at first. But it is like setting foot in the maze of a monstrous spider's web. The poor victim struggles on, but the tangle grows thicker and the meshes stronger till at last death and ruin are all that stare him in the face.

Sin's web grows more and more terrible at every step. The thing which appears so slight at the beginning keeps pulling and ever closing in till there is no possible escape, save by the grace of God.

The way of safety?

There is but one safe way, and that is not to set the foot on the first round of sin's ladder, for that ladder never leads upward, but always downward to lower depths.

Round and round the bewildered traveler in the dark goes, until by-and-by he wakes to see that he is forever face to face with the wrong he has done. Keep your feet now and ever in the way of truth and right. Then there will be no shadows at the end.—Edgar L. Vincent.

Not Sand But Seed (635).

In the fact that the harvest is determined by the kind of seed sown, we have an unchanging law of the natural and spiritual world. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." Like produces like. We reap from the fields of nature that which we have sown. Why should we not apply this natural law to the spiritual world? What is character? Is it not the constant outflow of habits of life and thought? The seed-thought results in the harvest of action. Sow the action and we reap a habit. Sow the habit and the resultant harvest is character: and character fixes destiny. Thought is not a grain of sand, but seed with germinant qualities.

Hence, I deprecate that free and popular absolution which is given to a young man who is sowing wild oats. If you sow wild oats, you must harvest wild oats. If you sow to wind, you reap to whirlwind. God

in his great mercy sometimes causes a partial failure of the harvests—but the reaping is inevitable. "Be not deceived. God is not mocked."

It is impossible to pass through a career of sin and not be polluted. The wound on my body or my soul may heal, but the scar remains. And then think of the tragedy of a misspent, a wasted life! Young man, stop and consider your sowing, I beseech you.—Rev. Marion J. Kline,

Christ Reaped Our Harvest (636).

Even God could not set aside the law of the harvest. The seed had been sown and the harvest must be reaped. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus Christ came to die, the sinless for the sinful. He came to reap what we had sown. He came to gather the harvest of the evil seed we had been sowing, and that harvest caused him to lay aside his crown in glory, to come to earth, to lead the life of a wanderer and an outcast, to suffer death upon the cruel cross. And they led Jesus out to the place that is called Golgotha, and there they crucified him. The eternal harvest reaped by the suffering and death of the co-equal Son of God.

As Christians we rejoice in a Saviour who reaped the harvest of our evil seed-sowing, who paid the debt and set us free. We are now sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit we are going to reap life everlasting.

We are sowing in the realm of the Spirit, and we are going to reap in eternity, according to the way that we sow in this spiritual realm. We are saved by grace, but we are going to be rewarded according to our works. I close with a word to my non-Christian friends. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Christians and non-Christians are alike in this, but you have refused to allow Jesus Christ to become your Saviour, you have refused to allow Jesus Christ to reap the harvest of your wrongdoing. Yet he came into the world for that very purpose. He said: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance," and "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." My closing question is this, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Remember, oh remember, that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Rev. Curtis Lee Laws,

The Wages (637). ."The wages of sin is"—benumbment.—J. H. Jowett.

The Sure Harvest (638).

Take the physical laws of this human nature of ours. Let a man sin against his own body by sensual indulgence; let him give way to the drink habit; let him wallow in the mire of lust, and he finds the universe against him, he finds Nature arising for his punishment. He reaps the sure and certain penalty of his wickedness and folly, in quivering limbs, bleared eyes, raw-edged nerves, impaired health, premature death. When we postpone either punishment or reward to a future world, we do greatly err. Punishment is immediate and unescapable.—Rev. J. D. Jones.

The Immediate and Remote Harvest (639).

That penalty's the best to bear
  Which follows soonest on the sin;
And guilt's a game where losers fare
  Better than those who seem to win.

How easy to keep free from sin!
  How hard that freedom to recall!
For dreadful truth it is that men
  Forget the heavens from which they fall.

—Coventry Patmore.

A Seed's Vitality (640).

The seed is the vital thing, and it has in it forces which do not appear.

It is said that in 1844 a mummy was found in an ancient Egyptian tomb. The hieroglyphics on the mummy cloth placed the date of burial as far back as the early Pharaohs. The mummy was taken to the British Museum and there some seeds were found in its hand. They were like peas, and out of curiosity they were planted, and in due time a vine came forth prolific and healthy and green. Oh, the power wrapped up in every seed!—Selected.

"The Flesh"—"The Spirit" (641).

Vice woos many a thoughtless youth with enchanting songs and a bewitching loveliness. She seems to promise only joy and perennial delights, if one will yield to her dalliance. But a myriad witnesses of every age and of every land testify from bitter experience that to those who follow her she shrinks sooner or later into repulsive loathsomeness, and appears at last in her revolting lair, amid husks and swine, surrounded by the wretched victims of her deceptive charms. "You are hungry," says the devil, "eat." "Sell your birthright for a mess of porridge. What is your birthright worth? What present want of your hungry soul and body can it feed? You are hungry, eat. You are inflamed with desires; gratify those desires, even though you know you can not do it innocently or rightfully." And many a soul, since Eve in the garden of Eden substituted sensuality for innocent wedded joys, has sinned as she sinned, and sorrowed as she sorrowed. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting joys.—Rev. G. F. S. Payson, D.D.

LXXXIV. THE FRUITS OF AN INDWELLING CHRIST.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."—Ephesians 3:17-19.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In an exceptionally able sermon on faith's revelations, Rev. Dr. W. H. Main said:

I. A thousand men might tell you that honey is sweet, but you would never know it until you had tasted it. Experience is tasting and seeing that the thing is good. From curiosity, a lawyer entered a meeting for the relation of experience and took notes. So impressed was he that at the close of the meeting he arose and said: "My friends, I hold in my hands the testimony of no less than sixty persons who have spoken here this morning. They have all testified with one accord that there is a reality in religion, they having experienced its power in their own hearts. Many of these persons I know. Their word would be received in any court of justice. They would not lie, and they cannot all be mistaken. I intend to lead a new life. Will you pray for me?" What foolishness for one to deny Christianity, because he himself has not experienced it.

The testimony of a single prayer meeting, taking into account the character of the people speaking, would win any case in a court of law.

II. Christianity is not an experiment but an experience. An experiment is something to be tried; experience is something that has been tried. Experiment is uncertain; experience is an unerring guide. Mr. Ruskin, in his earlier life, described this experience as "a relation that might truly exist between God and his creatures." Experience is a most wonderful safeguard. "Bread is poisonous," some one tells you, but you smile, for you have been eating bread every day for years.

"How do you know that your Bible is true?" said a skeptic to a poor widow. "Sir, by my own heart experience." "Oh," said he contemptuously, "your experience is nothing to me." "That may be, sir, but it is everything to me." Things we do not understand always seem absurd. An Indian returning from Washington was shot dead by an old chief for stating that he had seen the white men attach a great ball to a canoe and then rise up and sail through the air. Such a liar, said the old chief, should not live. And yet the Indian had but told of a balloon ascension.

III. Because you cannot enter into the experiences of another, do not deny their reality. God often reveals himself in a most marvelous way through experience. In the story of many conversions you may hear this statement: "As I prayed suddenly a great peace filled my soul."

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Rev. Dr. George F. Pentecost illuminated this theme by the following instance: While conducting evangelistic services in a New England

city I was the guest of a gentleman whose wife, convalescing from severe illness, was under a cloud of spiritual coldness. She could not see how she could be the object of God's love, when her own heart was so cold and loveless. One day I found her seated in a room with a large southern window. Though midwinter, the sun was streaming into the window upon flowers and plants and filling all the room with light and genial warmth. My invalid friend was seated in the window under the rays of the sun. She was still in distress of mind. I quoted to her, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" but she said that she was entirely devoid of the love that was therein commanded, and utterly unable to realize any love to God. In vain I tried to make her see that it was God's love which was spoken of in the text, and not hers; that she was bidden to keep herself in the love God had toward her. Finally, I said: "Why do you come so often and sit so long in this south window?"

"Why," she replied, "you know how long I have been ill with the rheumatic fever. But latterly I have been delivered from it, except in this left shoulder. So the doctor suggested that I sit in this south window, and see what a sun-bath would do for me. This is why I am here."

"Well," said I, "and has the sun-bath done you any good?"

"Oh, yes! I had not taken my daily bath here for more than a week or ten days until the pain left me; but it is so delicious to feel the genial warmth of this sunshine that I still come every day for a little while."

"Ah, my friend," I replied, "this is exactly what the apostle is exhorting you to do when he says 'keep yourselves in the love of God.' Your soul has grown cold, and is full of the rheumatism of doubt and distress. In vain you have tried to expel your doubts and fears. There is but one remedy. Go and sit in the south window of God's love, and let the warm, life-giving rays of his glad sunshine pour themselves into your heart, and his love will chase out every doubt and fear, thaw away all coldness, and fill you with a joy and peace that will be more delicious to your soul than this material sunshine is to your body, so long the home of sickness and pain. And, after your doubts and fears have been dissipated, you will be glad of an hour every day, yea, you will be glad of the privilege of sitting, or standing, or walkiing, or working all the day long in the 'love of God.' For it pours itself out day and night, and is confined to no place or time. It is the believer's privilege always to keep himself in the love of God, as it is the sinner's privilege to step into it whenever he will."

This thought seemed to strike her very forcibly. She exclaimed: "Oh! I have been trying to bring forth something good to offer to God, and then to find peace and comfort in something I have done or felt. Just keep yourself in the love of God," she went on, in a kind of soliloquy, "and let that fill you and quicken you. I might have saved myself weeks and months of suffering, far worse than the pains of illness, if I had only known this, or, at least, acted upon it; for, surely, I have known this. This comes of dwelling on one's own thoughts and feelings, instead of keeping close to the Word of God, and being taught and led by that."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

A Testimony (642).

It is fifty-three years since, by the grace of God, I was "delivered from

the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." The change was so great that I have never doubted it, and what is another good proof, my family have not done so. In the early part of my Christian life God gave me this promise. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." And it has been fulfilled. One day, while singing a hymn I was struck by the words of these verses. I sang again, and then dropping the tune, I cried in earnest prayer:

"Jesu, let my nature feel
Thou art God unchangeable;
Jah, Jehovah, great I AM,
Speak into my soul Thy name.

"Grant that every moment I
May believe, and feel Thee nigh;
Steadfastly beholding Thy face,
Stablished with abiding grace."

What I felt while uttering this prayer I cannot describe. I was taken out of myself and taken into God. Since that day Jesus Christ has through faith been made unto me "wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—Selected.

The Vision of Christ (643).

D. L. Moody once said that he used to race with his shadow in his boyhood days, and he wondered why the shadow always kept ahead of him. But one day he was running with his face toward the sunlight, and, chancing to glance back, he saw his shadow coming behind, and staying there. To keep shadows from darkening the heart we must always face toward Jesus Christ.

A Dominant Passion (644).

The peculiar glory of Christ is that he provides a dominant passion, before whose power Satan falls from the high places of the soul he has usurped. What the Jews said of the Redeemer weeping over Lazarus we take for our race, "Behold! how he loved him."—Nutting.

What Christ Can Do For and In You (645).

Humboldt tells of a granite mound at the junction of two South American rivers, called "Mother's Rock." It commemorated this incident: A hostile expedition to capture prisoners had been made among these Indians by the Spaniards. Among other prisoners taken was a woman who was surprised alone in a hut, her husband having gone off on a hunting expedition, accompaied by the children. After being carried to San Fernando, the desire to see her children induced her to escape. She fled repeatedly, but was as often caught and brought back and violently flogged, but without effect. It was then determined to send her to a distant station on the Rio Negro, whence it would be impossible for her to return. While the canoe was passing up the river she flung herself into the stream, was thrown ashore by the waves and escaped into the woods, but was again caught, brought back, and most cruelly beaten. She was taken to a distant station and closely confined, but in spite of her wounds she took advantage of a dark, stormy night to unfasten with her teeth the cords which bound her and again fled in search of her children.

For many days and nights she wandered through a trackless forest, at that period of the year inundated, and swarming with venomous reptiles. She swam the swollen rivers; her flesh was torn with thorns and the spikes of the cactus; her only food for days was the large black ants that she caught, but over all obstacles her love conquered and she reached her children. Oh, if the love of a poor, heathen Indian woman could do that, what cannot the divine and ever-blessed Christ do in faithful constancy and fidelity to you?—Louis A. Banks, D.D.

Christ-Knowledge (646). "How do you know you are a Christian?" She answered, "Why, he saved my soul!" That was an explanation that no interrogations and no fears could disturb.—Selected.

The Reality of the Love of Christ (647).

Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer, writes of the perils and terrible trials of his struggles in Central Africa: "Those whose faith in God is strong feel a sense of security in the deepest wilds. An invisible Good Influence surrounds them, to whom they may appeal in distress, an Influence which inspires noble thoughts, comfort in grief, resolution when weakened by misfortune. I imperfectly understand this myself, but I know when I have called I have been answered, strengthened, and assisted. It was of benefit to myself and to others." This experience might be confirmed in fuller expression from the testimony of many a saintly writer; but this from one not conscious of saintliness, or of having a message for others, has its peculiar value. It is the unconscious testimony of a strong man, living the most strenuous life, to the reality of the love of Christ as an abiding presence, as an atmosphere in which alone he found he could face the daily task and meet the constantly recurring peril.—Stimson.

LXXXV. OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR GROWTH.

"Stir up the gift of God which is in thee."—2 Timothy 1:6.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. H. Jowett, D.D., gave the following strong setting forth of the implications of this text: How shall we carry out the apostle's counsel, "Stir up the gift that is in thee?"

I. Let us clearly recognize that our sacred fire may smolder. To be conscious of a peril is to have taken the first step to escape it.

II. Let us deliberately put our wills behind our gifts. Do not leave the gift to look after itself. Put your will behind it. For instance, put your will behind your love and ever extend its dominion. Let it be driven by a will intent on retaining the glow and multiplying its conquest.

III. Let us range our imaginations in support of our wills. The will and the imagination can together do much to keep any passion burning. If will is to drive compassion, imagination must supply the force to will. Let the will and the imagination be at work, for instance, upon the needs and sorrows of a great city, and the gift of compassion will be kept burning.

IV. We must "pray without ceasing." We must so dispose our souls toward heaven that the breath of God can blow upon us continually. If we drop prayer, we shut out the moving air; when we take up our abode in Lotus Land, our finer passions cool and all the noblest passions fall to sleep.

V. And, lastly, we must offer the sacrifice of praise. A thankful spirit supplies mystic oxygen to every sacred flame. The really thankful heart is never narcotized by unfriendly forces in its surroundings. "Keep thy spirit wakeful with a thankful passion."

* * *

Prof. George Lansing Raymond, D.D., in a sermon on this theme says:

I. Growth is difficult. A man may have a few Christian principles, a germ of life, and, for this reason, may find himself, by and by, rightly situated in the midst of spiritual surroundings; but such a character may occupy the same position there that an acorn does in a landscape. Of full grown plants, of trees—of strong, broad, comely, graceful trees—how few are produced in this spiritual world! Look at the pride, the prejudice, the envy, the gossip, the bigotry, the covetousness and the deception that prevail in our nominally Christian communities.

II. Yet, although growth is difficult, it is essential. Things spiritual, like things natural, wither and die if they do not continue to grow. The Christian's life must pass beyond its first impulse in the feelings. The truth is that mere feelings ebb as well as flow. This is their nature. If you would promote permanence in that which causes the feeling, you must give the man something capable of increasing in scope and engaging the interest of his entire manhood.

III. Our Christian growth will be in proportion to the degree of illu-

mination received from Christ. This is the sun which alike woos the confidence of the tiny sprout of religion when first it dares to venture from the shelter of its seed, and brings a flush upon the ripening fruit that crowds upon the topmost limb as though to catch and to reflect the earliest signal of the coming dawn. The knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

* * *

On the possibility of getting great results from this stirring up process, Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler said: There is prodigious power in singleness of love for Jesus—in the doing "just one thing," and that is to live solely for the Master. A man of very moderate talents and endowments becomes a leading mind as soon as Christ gets complete hold of him. I can point to more than one plain, modest, moderately educated Christian who has attained to a great propelling power in the Church simply from the momentum of his godliness. He follows Jesus so heartily, so projectively, that he carries others along with him by his sheer momentum. And that is not brain-power, or purse-power, mainly, but heart-power.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Always At It (648)

Unless we are constantly warring against it by the cultivation of the inner life, our environment will master us. It will suggest our thoughts, color our conceptions, rule our habits and actions. It is the natural tendency which needs the supernatural to counteract it. We go with the current unless something mightier than the current pulls us the other way. Our thoughts and judgments and modes of life fall like the molten metal from a furnace into moulds made ready for them, and inevitably take that shape unless some higher power catches them up before they fall and fashions them after a diviner pattern.—Rev. J. J. Greenough.

Neglecting to Stir (649).

In one of my early pastorates I asked one of my parishioners how she was getting along in her Christian life. She replied: "Very poorly. My life is a disgrace to me and to the church; it is a disgrace to Jesus Christ. I don't understand why it is." "Do you study your Bible every day?" I asked. "Oh, no; but I study it occasionally, when I have time." A little baby was lying in a baby-carriage near by, and I said: "Suppose you should feed that baby once in two hours today and once in six hours tomorrow, then let it go without eating at all for three or four days because you were busy, and then go back and feed it every two hours the next day, and keep up that process; do you think the child would grow?" "No," she said; "I think the child would die under that treatment." "And yet that is just the way you are treating your soul."—R. A. Torrey, D.D.

Growth Better Than Permanance (650).

Growth is better than permanence, and permanent growth is better than all.—James A. Garfield.

Religion is a process repeated, not a process remembered.—C. M. Lamson.

Grow In Grace (651).

Dr. Joseph Parker declared that the greatest imperative of all is: "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Christian must never be content with a low degree of grace while God holds out a high degree as attainable.

Progress or Retrograde (652).

In correction of the common fault of backwardness and indisposition to learn, Paul bids us observe that growth is expected in the Christian. In fact, he tells us that if we are not growing we are dying. This is the law of all life. Nothing is born mature. It passes through a period of growth, and it must grow or die. The parent who is delighted with the innocent helplessness of his child, and rejoices in its efforts at speech, becomes seriously alarmed if this lisping, tottering, help-requiring state threatens to become permanent. Would that cessation of growth in the spiritual life created as much dismay! Would that it seemed as monstrous and unnatural to have our spiritual as our natural growth checked! It would be a startling revelation to us all were our discernment of our spiritual condition as keen and direct and true as our vision of the body. What do you honestly believe you would see yourself to be? No most painful and threatening disease is so appalling and distressing as the adult of twenty or thirty years in the body of a child of six; have you spiritually made the growth due to the time you have been a Christian, or are you still a child? Have we grown up to maturity? Have we grown beyond our associates, or are we conscious that they stand head and shoulders above us? Physically, we once needed to be lifted if we were to see or touch certain things: we should be humiliated were it so still; but is it so spiritually? Or do we now need to put ourselves into a constrained attitude when we wish to attend to things that once were on our natural level? Are we able to do the spiritual work of the world? Do we find ourselves now standing face to face with things that once towered above us and seemed unattainable? Can we stand alone now? Are we "men in understanding," able for ourselves to see what is good, having within ourselves a strength sufficient for all the needs of life?—Marcus Dods, D.D.

Worth Doing Well (653).

I am not here this afternoon to tell you to be religious. You know that. I am not here to tell you to seek the kingdom of God. I have come to tell you to seek the kingdom of God first. First. Not many people do that. They put a little religion into their life—once a week, perhaps. They might just as well let it alone. It is not worth seeking the kingdom of God unless we seek it first. Suppose you take the helm out of a ship and hang it over the bow, and send that ship to sea, will it ever reach the other side? Certainly not. It will drift about anyhow. Keep religion in its place, and it will take you straight through life, and straight to your Father in heaven when life is over. But if you do not put it in its place, you may just as well have nothing to do with it. Religion out of its place in a human life is the most miserable thing in the world. There is nothing that requires so much to be kept in its place as religion, and its place is what? second? third? "First."—Prof. Henry Drummond.

Give Christ the Best (654).

If Christ is to use us to the best advantage, then he must have all there is of us. We must give ourselves entirely to his service. Bishop Hendrix, in his "Literature of the Saints," says that revealed religion shows the delight which God has in a man who gives the whole of himself that he may know and do the will of God. Only when we give our all to God can we know him, and can he make use of us. Whatever of selfish motives control us, by so much are the intellectual faculties dulled and the spiritual perceptions dimmed. We increase our power and enlarge our influence only as we forget ourselves. Horace used to say that no avaricious man could be a poet, and Milton declared that "he who would write a great poem must make his life a great poem." God makes the largest use of those whose powers are wholly his in fellowship and service.—Selected.

Effort Essential (655).

The possession of the truth seems such a simple matter, but in fact it is very difficult. We never can possess the truth until we have paid the price and earned it. Life is built up on the basis of this fact. It is like the playing of athletic games. It is very easy to play them by learning the rules and sitting on the spectators' benches. The bleacher athlete has a pleasant task. The real possession of the rules of the game, however, is for the contestants who have mastered them as they stand in the official book, and then have trained themselves to keep the rules in the stress of fierce conflict. They have subjected themselves to discipline and given their time and strength to practice in order that they might learn the truth.

Moral and spiritual progress is purchased in the same way. He who knows the truth and is set free by it must earn it by discipline and sacrifice of temporary pleasures for permanent joy. The truth seems so clear and winsome when we see it in the terms of the early life of Jesus. When we attempt to repeat the motives of Jesus in our daily conduct, we discover the difference between possessing the truth in terms of an intellectual conviction or a fine emotion and mastering the truth through devotion to its imperial demands. In order to make it effective, we must earn it. Subjection and exercise are the price that must be paid for real ownership. We never know the full joy of being possessed by the truth until we have earned it.—Zion's Herald.

Individual Effort (655a).

"The Lord helps those who help themselves" appears to be an almost universal principle in nature. A butterfly has difficulty in breaking out from its chrysalis; but if you try to help it by cutting the obstacles out of its way, it will issue weak and dull in color. Its own struggles contribute to its perfection. Nature has placed a coat of mail upon the ordinary crab, struggling with the tempestuous seas. But the hermit crab, dwelling in the vacated shells of other animals, has suffered the penalty of having his coat of mail exchanged for a thin membrane, while he has degenerated generally, has partially or wholly lost several vital organs, and been reduced to narrow limits of existence. "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

LXXXVI. SURE.

"For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Timothy 1:12.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. J. B. Slocum, D.D., gave this text the following homiletic treatment: In the midst of the shifting conditions of a life of chance and change there are some things that abide. While occasional showers of meteors startle our upward gaze, there is no need for alarm. The great, fixed stars are still in their places. In this age of doubt there are some certainties more eternal than the stars. The very word by which Paul expressed his conviction is full of interest. It is the word "know." At its heart lies that other word, "see." It is as though the apostle had said: "My conclusions are the result of diligent observation and profound experience."

How did Paul arrive at his great certainty? By no one road, but by several.

I. First of all, through the exercise of his intellectual gifts. When such a man, governed more by intellectual verities than by mere emotionalism, exclaims, "I know!" and by that affirmation designates a process that has involved all the rich capacities of his being, it is well to recognize the statement as eminently worthy of acceptation.

II. Again Paul came to his magnificent conclusion through the test of a great personal abandonment. If anyone supposes he understands the price of Paul's abandonment, let him not forget to picture it in terms of our modern day, and insist that his hero step down from those heights of fame and power that would satisfy the most inordinate ambition. All these things which had held a priceless value in the estimate of the aspiring young Hebrew he willingly relinquished in order that he might win Christ: counting all worldly preferment but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus, that he might know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings.

III. A third process by which Paul reached the high altitudes of faith was the via crucis of his sufferings. There is no language better than his own with which to recount the amazing catalogue of what he was pleased to term "our light afflictions." Ah, the storms sweeping down on his devoted soul would have driven him to despair had he not been anchored in the immovable conviction, "For I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." On the eve of his martyrdom this valiant ambassador wrote: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

IV. Can we in our day possess this same certainty that appeared so gloriously in the life and service of the apostle?—Selected.

* * *

In preaching on "The Ground of Our Confidence," Rev. S. v. R. Trowbridge, D.D., said:

I. What guarantee is there that our aspiration shall become anything more than aspiration? We despise a man who is always talking about the noble things he would like to do. It is pathetic to be a dreamer of fine dreams and nothing more. There is this guarantee: that God begins to work in your life. I believe that God is constantly active with beneficent power, but not regardless of our attitude. His energies, his love, his goodness, are ever ready to reach forth to our rescue and to our comfort, but he awaits our decision. He respects the freedom of our choice. He bestows his blessing where there is a sincere longing for divine friendship.

II. These are the good tidings which the New Testament brings us, that Christ himself is the incarnation of righteousness, that he is the right, and knows the right and teaches the right, and that he stands ready to give the bread of life to everyone who is hungry for it. In the temple courtyard in Jerusalem Jesus said to the multitude: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." And again: "I am the living bread which cometh down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever." To come into daily personal relation with Christ, to understand from him the nature of God, to be quickened by his indignation against deceit and greed, to receive for every common task and for every unexpected emergency a rich measure of his love—this is to receive spiritual food and strength from God Himself.

III. And if we wish to test these statements from history we are at liberty to do so. Fortunately the New Testament contains much more than the mere statement of the gospel. The Book of Acts is a revelation of the truth in action. When the disciples first came to Jesus they had very little to qualify them for the great life work they were destined to perform. They were dull in spiritual apprehension. They were quarrelsome and self assertive. They were under the influence of Jewish tradition and superstitions. But they were not satisfied with their past. There was a certain hunger in their hearts which craved for a new life, a surer knowledge of the love of God. And in the Book of Acts we find them rejoicing in the new strength which they have received. Peter is preaching to thousands. John is giving life and health to the beggar at the Gate Beautiful. James is braving the anger of King Herod. Others of the twelve are scattering in different directions to begin the great missionary campaign which carried Christianity to all the provinces of the Roman empire. And in all this ministry there is the consciousness that their hunger is satisfied in Christ. There is the note of confidence and strength. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Assurance (656).

Matthew Arnold wrote in honor of the departure of Tennyson:

"No moaning of the bar; sail forth, strong ship,
Into that gloom which has God's face for a far light,
Not a dirge, but a proud farewell from each fond lip,
And praise, abounding praise, and fame's faint starlight.

No moaning of the bar; musical drifting
Of time's waves, turning to the eternal sea,
Death's soft wind, all thy gallant canvas lifting,
And Christ, thy Pilot to the peace to be."

How assured one feels when on deck of a great steamer at evening time, he hears the voice of the man in the lookout, crying to the night, "All's well, and the lights burn bright." The passengers know little of the condition of the vessel or of the weather, but they believe the voice from the lookout. Is it not so in the voyage of life? How little we know of dangers or disease, of life or death, of present or future, but the words of our Pilot are full of comfort, as he calls out, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end," and the lights of heaven are burning bright.—Rev. Edward Whittier Caswell.

"The Great Keeper" (657).

Just as the mountain supports the tiny blade of grass and the modest floweret, as well as the giant pine or cedar; just as the ocean bears up in safety the sea-bird seated on its crested waves, as well as the leviathan vessel; so, while the great Keeper of Israel can listen to the archangels' song and the seraphs' burning devotions, he can carry in his bosom the feeblest lamb of the fold, and lead gently the most sorrowing spirit.—Macduff.

Carlyle's Failure to Trust (658).

Is there anything sadder in history than the cry of Carlyle to his dead mother: "Your boy, Tom, long out of his school-days, now has fallen very lonely, very lame and broken in this pilgrimage of his life. From your grave in Ecclefechan kirkyard yonder you bid him trust in God, and that he will try if he can understand and do, for the conquest of the world and of death and of hell does verily lie in that if one can but understand and do it." But Carlyle couldn't understand, and he couldn't overcome.—Selected.

Sustained by Trust in Christ (659).

Blanche Ganoud, a Huguenot woman persecuted under Louis XIV, was stripped to the waist and beaten by six women under orders, with bunches of willow rods. She was tied to a beam in her kitchen. She writes: "At this moment I received the greatest consolation that I can ever receive in my life." She said her peace and joy were beyond description. The women said, "We must double the blows, she does not feel them; she neither speaks nor cries." "How should I have cried?" she writes, "since I was swooning with happiness within."—George Barton Cutten.

Faith's Serenity (660).

Now this serene and courageous mind is surely needed in our own day. Our age is full of changes and unrest. I am not afraid of the disturbance. I regard it as the workings of the spiritual leaven. The widespread ferment is of God. Established things are being shaken. Venerable customs are being tested and tried. Unexpected presences appear on the hill almost every day, and many men are afraid and their hearts are sinking in pessimistic forebodings. They fear evil tidings, and

every new visitor startles them as he knocks at their door. We need to get to the central things. Secondary shelters are of little or no avail.

We need a profound experimental knowledge of the power of God's grace. We must have an experience that no new setting of circumstances can ever shake. We must know God as a vital, vitalizing presence, whose work in our hearts can never be gainsaid. It is only an experience of grace that can enrich the trust that gives serenity. The man whose heart is resting in the Lord can watch events like a man who is watching the sunrise.—J. H. Jowett, D.D.

Conquering by Confidence (661).

It is told of Blandina, a maiden martyr of the second century, that after she had endured stripes, tearing by beasts and the red-hot iron chair, she was enclosed in a net and thrown to a bull. Being tossed by the animal for some time, she was quite superior to her pain, through her hope, faith, and her fellowship with Christ, and at length breathed out her soul to God.—Cutten.

Luther's Confidence (662).

When Martin Luther had stood his trial before the German Emperor and was shut up in the Castle of Wartburg and the Emperor had issued an edict that all his writings were to be destroyed, it seemed as if his enemies had triumphed over him and his "seed," spiritually, was cut off. But Luther was a strong, burly man with a robust, overcoming faith, and he closed his letters from his prison thus: "In the region of the birds, who sing beautifully on the trees, praising God night and day with all their might."—John F. Cowan, D.D.

"I Lived" (663).

One of the actors in the French Revolution, who was asked what he did during several awful weeks of peril, replied, "I lived." Sometimes it is just enough to live. Let us hold confidently by the great truths, promises, and hopes of our faith, and they will not fail us in the great crises of life and death.—Watkinson.

The Vision of the Keeping Christ (664).

The world is divided sharply into "drudges and dreamers," and as we take away the latter only the former are left. We are told that "where there is no vision the people perish," and this is not a truth outside the range of common life. We must get our feet upon the truth that some things have been settled; that there are some facts of religion that can no more "flux in the fires of the crucible of criticism, than gold can be melted by the flicker of a fire-fly." If God has put into our soul any visions or signs of a greater day, then let us walk in the light which is the light of all our seeing. Blessed are we if we behold, though we may not go. If we are true to such heavenly vision as is vouchsafed to us, we may safely leave ourselves with Him at whose right hand are the eternal years.—Ambrose Shepherd, D.D.

Faith and Cheer (665).

Wise nature lovers tell us that already spring has come with the lengthening of the days and the renewed power of the less-slanting sun

Take a country walk with such a one, and he will point out a multitude of tokens of the spring. It is a cheerful thought, even if it seems to illustrate the power of seeing what one most desires to see. Expressed in terms of thought life, this faculty of vision might indeed be called a sort of self-reflection; it is really a free choice between alternatives. One must have knowledge and inward cheer to feel the spring so vividly through the stinging of the cold. It involves in kindred things a whole some use of the powers of will. We may concentrate our attention on the wintry aspect of the world, or we may look through this to find some reality of spring. It is like the observer's swing of the telescope—we may lower it until we see nothing but the sordid details of some distant dust heap, or we may raise it to make discoveries among the stars. A mere thoughtless optimism is, of course, foolish and impossible; but it is wholesome for the soul to cultivate the habit of raising the telescope. It means not merely a way to get enjoyment out of life, but also to contribute to the joy and strength of others. The reflection of such an inward cheer is one of the best gifts we have to offer to the world. And it is possible to reach possession of it by cultivating the habit of seeking out the best, even in wintry experiences and stormy days.—Boston Transcript.

LXXXVII. THE WARFARE ENDED: THE CROWN WON.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Guthrie's skill as a homilist and as a sympathetic interpreter of Scripture found striking illustration in his unfolding of this verse. He said:

I. Look at the Christian life under the aspect of a fight. This aspect of life is not peculiar to that of the Christian. Indeed, so far from the followers of the world being exempt from toil and hardship, it would not take a man half the care and time and trouble to get to heaven, which it takes any man to get rich, and many a man to get to hell. The question, therefore, is not whether we shall fight, but what for, and on whose side—on that of Jesus, whose award is life, or on that of sin, whose wages is death. Now, with regard to the Christian's fight, I remark 1. He has to fight against the world. 2. He has to fight against Satan.

II. The character of the Christian's fight. It is a good fight. 1. Because it is in a good cause. Your enemies are not of your kindred, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh; they are the enemies of God and Christ, of virtue and liberty, of light and peace, of your children, and of your race, of your bodies and of your souls; tyrants that would bind you in chains worse than iron, and burn, not your house above your head, but yourself in hell forever. 2. Because here victory is unmingled joy. It is not so in other fights. The laurels that are won where groans of suffering mingle with the shouts of battle are steeped in tears: and when cannon roar, and bells ring out a victory, and shouting crowds throng the streets, and illuminations turn night into day, dark is many a home where fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, widows and orphans, weep for the brave who shall never return. There are thorns in victory's proudest crown. He, whom men call the Iron Duke, is reported to have said that there was nothing so dreadful as a battle won, except a battle lost. Thank God, our joy over sins slain, bad passions subdued, Satan defeated, has to suffer no such abatements.

* * *

Speaking of death's significance for the Christian, Rev. Dr. Cleland B. McAfee, said: Dr. Cuyler once told me that when Newman Hall was on his deathbed they asked him if he felt any pain. "No," he answered, 'not any pain—nothing to disturb the solemnity of dying." There is nothing in our Christian faith to lessen that solemnity. It takes all the sting out of death; quiets all nervous dread of it for ourselves or our friends. But it leaves death still a great, outstanding, solemn reality. The use of petals of flowers instead of earth at the moment of committal of the body

to the grave is but a subterfuge, an effort to cover up reality. Death is not a flower fact; it is an earth fact for us all.

I. Death is a solemn fact because of its absolute certainty. In most other experiences we have some power of determination, some choice of will. Here we are in the grip of forces with which we have absolutely nothing to do, beyond accepting their results. Defiance or rebellion is like the fighting of a child against the tide. Here is your rich man, able to have all human skill deployed against death; there is your poor beggar, dropping on the street, to be carried to the nearest refuge. Both are the same to death. Death does not call by the "Blue Book." No man can ever evade it. Death is a certainty. Can we afford not to be solemn about it?

II. Death is solemn because of its suddenness. Sometimes we say, "He was a long time dying." But he was not. There was one instant in which the whole momentous change was made. He was living—in an instant he was dead. We are never fully prepared for the death of our loved ones. We say we are ready, but when death becomes fact, we catch our breath, and things change about us. That is part of God's plan. Death is a common experience, but it is not meant to be commonplace. We can never adjust ourselves to it before it comes. Any death that comes near us demands sharp changes in life. It is not like a gradual curve in the road; it is a corner where we change direction.

III. Death is solemn because of its perpetual mystery. Standing beside a deathbed, an aged physician looked solemnly on the dead face and said under his breath: "I have seen this many times, but I do not know to this hour what has happened!" Thoughtful men do not know Life in its coming and in its going is always mysterious. While it continues here in the familiar surroundings, we have experience to guide us When it goes out into the realm beyond the grave, experience fails. What changes are made? What is life without this body in which we have lived? How does the soul live? What must we think of an event which in one instant will take us away from all earthly tasks and opportunities? And if the finality be not simply in the matter of earthly service, but also in the matter of eternal destiny, how doubly solemn it becomes?

Our Christian faith makes no pretense of disturbing the solemnity of dying. It does not remove one of these great solemnizing facts. It only gives us a faith by which we may front them without fear or anxiety. Jesus did not go blithely to the tomb; he went bravely and with untrembling feet. For a Christian, death comes as a glad event by reason of his faith. In death he goes home; in death he rests from his labors, while his works follow him. But he walks softly as he approaches it. The most momentous change of his existence, he approaches it in the faith of his triumphant Master, fearlessly, but solemnly.

* * *

I. Surely the thought that the presence of death is only the presence of one of God's messengers who comes to open a door from gloom to glory should fill the human heart with joy. Earth's shadows darken the human side of the door, but the light of God's kingdom makes the spiritual side gloriously bright. If we could only keep our spiritual eyes unblinded by tears we would see in the presence of death a figure hold-

ing out to the soul its passport to the place prepared by Him who passed through the same gate and robbed death of its sting forever and for ever. If we could only keep our spiritual ears unvibrant to "earth so full of dreary noises," to the cries of "men with wailing in their voices," we should hear the music "of harpers harping with their harps" and singing "Glory and dominion and honor and power be unto our God for ever and ever." If we only could forget our language of woe that cries, "What shall I do? Oh, Absalom, my son, would God I had died for thee," we would hear and understand that other dialect whose words are full of eternal compensation, "I heard a voice saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

II. To the presence of death the Christian should gladly give his hand and say, "Lead me wheresoever thou will and open my mouth to speak the blessedness of the hope of immortality." "The sting of death is sin," but to those who sleep in Jesus there is no sting, for there is no sin. "The strength of sin is the law," but they who sleep in Jesus know no law save of triumph through him who hath loved them and washed them from their sin. And so it comes to pass that the grave has no victory.

III. The presence of death! Does it fill any heart with dismay? Let it no longer! The presence which has taken or shall take your dearest loved one forever from your sight is only God's high ambassador sent to lead that loved one to the couch which God has spread for his beloved. Comfort your heart with those wonderful words, "He giveth his beloved sleep."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Facing Death Fearlessly (666).

Many a man has felt a catch in his throat and a thrill in his blood as he listened to Robert Louis Stevenson's "Requiem," beginning:

"Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie
Glad did I live, and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will."

and has thought of the lonely grave on its mountaintop in the sounding Pacific. Death often looked very near to Stevenson, and we can imagine that he and Henley—during that year or more in Edinburgh when Henley was in a hospital and Stevenson was his frequent visitor—used to speak of the words by which they would wish to be remembered. Henley cried:

"Out of the night which covers me
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul."

He was less debonair than Stevenson and more bitter, but not less brave.

In 1880 Stevenson wrote a letter to Sidney Colvin from which we quote. Sick and poor, and practically stranded in San Francisco, he writes frankly of his discouragements, but whimsically, as always:

When I die . . . you can put upon my tomb . . .

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Born 1850, of a family of
Engineers, Died . . .
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

You, who pass this grave, put aside hatred; love kindness; be all services remembered in your heart and all offenses pardoned; and as you go down again among the living, let this be your question: Can I make some one happier this day before I lie down to sleep? Thus the dead man speaks to you from the dust; you will hear no more from him.

Who knows, Colvin, but I may thus be of more use when I am buried than ever when I was alive? The more I think of it, the more earnestly do I desire this.—The Congregationalist.

Fit for the Kingdom (667).

Our fitness for Christ's kingdom is thus tested. And in the end what will all else avail if we have not helped the work for which he lived and died? Are we so captivated by the work he gives us to do that we never dream of looking back? Has his idea of life and its uses such a charm for us, and does it so appeal to us, that we are compelled to turn our back on all competing ideals? Do we in point of fact give ourselves unreservedly and uncompromisingly to his way of life, not sorry to leave for ever behind us the pomps and vanities, the indulgences and shallow pleasures, the sinful excitements and wicked gratifications which so often form the substance—if it can be called substance—of human life? In other words, have we attained to know Christ? For, to know him, to see him as he really is, is to see that in him we have that "pearl of price" for which a man gladly sells all that he has.

If, then, we would be Christ's followers, we must be prepared to make his experience ours, his work our work, his person our chief joy. In other words, we must be prepared to be unworldly, consecrated, devoted. Who would not rejoice over him of whom with assurance we can say, "Whatever befalls that man, he will play his part in this world well, and will at length enter into the joy of his Lord?"

Would that we were all like Matthew, who has been called "the pattern of obedience to divine vocations, the model of prompt submission to holy inspirations," and of whom it has been said that he—

"Left all for God,
Self and the world and wealth,
At God's one word
Without question, without reserve,
Without delay."

Happy In Death (668). —Marcus Dods.

Charles N. Crittenton, who devoted his life and ample fortune to the establishment of homes for unfortunate women in over seventy cities, died as he lived, a happy Christian. Not only his last words, but

all that he said during the closing hours was recorded. Here are the things he said:

"It is God's will—he knows best."
"I have tried to be a friend to these poor girls—always their friend."
"There will be no dark river when Jesus comes."
The entire chapter of Isaiah 53, word for word.
The Lord's Prayer.
Many passages of Scripture.
The Apostles' Creed.
"Thank God for the victory."
Tried to sing the "Glory Song."
"Jesus, blessed Jesus."
"Florence, my baby—my baby."
"Good-bye, Jesus is coming."
"Beautiful—all is beautiful."
"Jesus is here."
"Glory—glory."—Selected.

Foregleams of Immortality (669).

(From "Eulogy of a Friend and Colleague in the Fifty-third Congress.")

I shall not believe that even now his light is extinguished. If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn, and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will he leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, who was made in the image of his Creator? If he stoops to give to the rose-bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the breeze, the sweet assurance of another spring-time, will he withhold the words of hope from the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay?

Rather let us believe that he, who in his apparent prodigality, wastes not the rain-drop, the blade of grass, or the evening's sighing zephyr, but makes them all to carry out his eternal plan, has given immortality to the mortal and gathered to himself the generous spirit of our friend.

Instead of mourning, let us address him with the poet:

"Thy day has come, not gone;
Thy sun has risen, not set;
Thy life is now beyond
The reach of death or change,
Not ended—but begun.
Oh, noble soul! Oh, gentle heart! Hail and farewell!"

—William Jennings Bryan

LXXXVIII. THE SECRET OF ENDURANCE.

"For he endured as seeing him who is invisible."—Hebrews 11:27.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. R. S. Candlish, D.D., used the following line of explication in developing this text:

I. What is this virtual seeing of him who is invisible? There must be wrought in me, between God and me, some sympathy, some good understanding and fellow feeling. There must be established between him and me some personal relation of mutual confidence and unity. There must, in a word, be formed a certain close unity of faith working by love. Then will that quasi vision "as seeing" be realized; that vivid sense and keen grasp of "my Lord and my God," as personally present which compensates for my never having set on him my bodily eyes.

II. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Not only at the Communion Table do you rest, but in the field of toil or of battle you endure, as seeing him who is invisible. So Christ himself, the man Christ Jesus, endured. The secret of his endurance was that with the eye of faith he always saw the Father. The Holy Ghost strengthens us to endure as seeing the unseen Saviour, even as he strengthened him to endure as seeing the unseen Father. It is in the felt and realized presence of a Divine person, unseen in one sense, but in another virtually and vividly seen, that your strength to endure lies. And he is to be seen by you, not merely as an object of contemplation in a leisure hour, but as in the time of danger, standing beside you, conversing with you, calling you by name, and bidding you be strong and of a good courage.

* * *

In an eloquent sermon on this text Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, D.D., said: "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

We cannot do in the higher life what we can sometimes do in the lower—we cannot make sure of the evening by a good use of the morning. There is a warfare from which there is no discharge on this planet.

I. Apply it first to the life we now live in the flesh. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." This is the last thing we should have expected Paul, of all men, to say about himself. But taking his confession at its face value, it may be read as a warning not against the possibilities of passion, but of passion exhausted.

II. How many men are there in middle and later life who come to believe in nothing, to hope in nothing, on earth or in heaven which has really to do with the things unseen and eternal? It is common to find when a man has, if not all he wants, yet all he needs, that getting older he is becoming meaner. What are called the growing infirmities of his body are coming to be the grave of his soul. Many a man who is outwardly saved by his strenuous years is, in his relaxation, a pitiable death in life. The right which he claims to indulge himself on the score

of his years may be a right which wrongs all that has gone before. . . . What an inspiration it is to young and generous natures to hear an old man of proved character, intelligence, and service, affirm his unshaken trust in the things of God and a higher humanity. It is when a man's work is done that, in this sense, he does his best work. When, in the evening of our days, we can still believe that good is good, although from the prepossessions of earlier years we find it hard to recognize it as good, we quicken others with a diviner life, and uplift them with a new courage. "For myself," says a wise teacher, "my religion and my convictions about many questions that agitate men's minds and hearts are, on this side of the grave, unalterable. But I will ever pray for the open heart which includes all attempts to do good as within the great harmonies of God."

III. "Rather than my life being over," writes a man of nearly fourscore years, "it is a series of new beginnings in seeking and finding fresh recruits for the service. And just before I go home, I want my last find for the Master to be the biggest and the best." "It is not," said Wellington, "that the British are necessarily better soldiers or braver men than the French. Where we had our advantage was in this—we could always keep on a quarter of an hour longer."

* * *

There is a saying among the British people that "the British soldier can be just as brave as any soldier in the world, and be brave for fifteen minutes longer."

I. It is often that last fifteen minutes that wins the battle. The beginning of a task may be easy; to keep at it will be harder; and to keep at it till it is really done is the hardest of all. One of the most pathetic facts in the world is that so many give up before they reach the end.

II. How can we make ourselves persevere? That is the practical side of this subject. What can we do to make sure that we shall not be among those who drop out of the race? What can we say to others that will help them to stay on the course till the race is run?

III. The great thing in running a race or doing a task is to keep one's heart on the goal. It is important to watch one's step and to take account of present circumstances, and be careful that each movement is skillfully made; but the thing that keeps us successfully at the task is the pull of the prize at the end.

IV. Another motive that should keep us true is the realization that if we slip, some one else will go down too. "No man liveth to himself." Every life is linked with other lives. If you persevere, others will persevere; if you fail, others will fail.—The Christian Herald.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Endurance (670).

The Christian's perseverance is a good deal like his courage in one respect: he can be Christlike only in proportion to his perseverance. To the ordinary mortal, however, the difference between courage and perseverance is a good deal like that between speed and endurance. The one can be cultivated much more easily than the other and you are

likely to have daily opportunities to display the one where the chances for the other are less frequent. After all, perhaps it is the need for perseverance which comes home to most of the people most of the time. Plutarch, a man of many wise words, gives us another angle, too, when he remarks, "Perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which cannot be overcome when they are together, yield themselves up when taken little by little." Therefore "let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not!"—Rev. G. J. Anderson.

Faint-Heart and Strong-Hope (671).

Believing in the possibility is half the battle.

Doubting is the main contributing factor of defeat.

Some one has recently worked out the following startling data concerning the conquest of the impossible. It rings out a combined rebuke and challenge for us as we stand confronted by a great crisis opportunity in our church life.

"Did you say, 'It cannot be done?' "

That is the cry of every timid soul of little faith and feeble purpose when confronted with a task demanding courage, concentration and strength of will.

Have you observed what has happened to the obstacles found in the path of progress during the past 40 years? Here are some of the visions of the dreamers of the world in the last 40 years—do you remember what you said about them?

In 1875: We shall draw from the open air an invisible force that will run our machinery, pull our trains and light our cities.

We shall transmit the human voice and converse with ease over a telegraph wire.

We shall abandon the pen for type in writing our business letters.

We shall also record and reproduce the human voice for the pleasure and profit of mankind.

"Dreams, dreams; it cannot be done."

In 1880: Let us conquer yellow fever and cut in half the death rate from tuberculosis, typhoid and diphtheria.

Let us build a torpedo boat that will speed safely and swiftly many fathoms under the sea.

Let us build a compact engine of high power and have "horseless carriages."

"Utterly impossible; it cannot be done."

In 1895: We shall send telegrams through space along electrical waves that follow the earth's curve; it will be of great value on the high seas.

Let us also photograph motion and reproduce it in moving pictures.

"More dreams; it cannot be done."

In 1898: Commodore Dewey will fight and defeat the Spanish fleet and forts in Manila Bay without losing a man or ship.

"Hopeless; it cannot be done."

In 1902: We shall have flying machines that will travel as fast as 100 miles per hour.

"Preposterous; it cannot be done."

In 1909: The North and South Poles will yet be reached by man.

"The dream of centuries; it cannot be done."

In 1910: China, the oldest and most absolute government, will be changed into a Republic.

"Wildest suggestion of all; it cannot be done."

But all these marvelous things have been done, have they not?

Is it not inspiring to reflect upon the success-compelling force of the brave, strong, purposeful men who have in your day performed these and other "impossibilities?"

For the Christian the secret of enduring grace lies in ever keeping in view the vision of "him who is invisible."

Our Divine Helper (672).

There is a legend of an old church in England—how centuries ago, when the monks were rearing it, a new temple for the worship of their God, there came among the workers a strange monk who took on himself the heaviest tasks. Once when a gigantic beam was needed for an important position and when, with great effort, it was lifted to its place, it was found to be some feet too short. The builders had tried their best, they had used the most careful measurement they knew, but there it was, too short, and their utmost skill could not find remedy. The night closed in upon the tired workers, and they went to their rest with sore heart, leaving only this unknown monk looking at the failure. But in the morning when the workers came forth, they saw the beam exactly in its place, lengthened to the precise dimensions needed, and resting accurately on its supports. But the unknown monk had disappeared. Yet the workers knew him now, and were certain they could carry the temple onward to its topmost turret. For he who had been working with them was none other than the Lord himself. They were not unhelped toilers. Nor are we.—Selected.

One Who Endured (673).

Before the Boxer uprising in China, a young Chinaman had been in attendance upon one of the Presbyterian schools. The studies had been too much for him and he had to give up. But while at school he had learned to know Jesus as his Saviour. He asked that he might be permitted to go back to his old home as a representative of the mission. So anxious was he that some literature was given him and he went forth as a colporteur. On his trip he learned much of the plans of the Boxers and decided he must do something to warn the Christians of their danger. He went to the Methodist Compound, the one in greatest danger, and to Christians throughout the city, and warned them of what was to occur. Then away from the city, thirty miles out into the country, he hastened with his message until all had been told. The Boxers caught him, asked him if he was a Christian, and he "began to preach unto them Jesus." They beat him and maltreated him and finally took his life. And he passed to his reward proclaiming the love of God for his executioners. He is but one of a great multitude who were once heathen, but who, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, have rejoiced to be adjudged worthy to suffer for his name.—Selected.

LXXXIX. LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."—Hebrews 12:1, 2.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In a notable sermon on this theme Rev. Dr. John H. Jowett said: The ways of time, and of our own time, too, are littered with the tear-stained witness of men who have sought the perfection of man without the Christ. Their expedients did not reach the torpor chamber, and the sleeper still slept on. Leave out the redeeming Christ, the reconciling Saviour, the reconciling Lord, and what is there left to us? Clean ideals will not suffice. Sonorous abstractions are not enough. Emersonian maxims will not wake the dead. We might as well take a score of fairy lamps, and tie them on a string, and swing them across our garden of sleeping seeds, and expect the silent march of summer pomp and glory, as assume that the proclamation of mere maxims will lead men out of wintry bondage into the summer glory of strength and liberty. Ask those who have tried this painful path of unevangelistic enterprise, and you will find that their testimony is complete. Men may be in need of an ideal, but they need a Saviour infinitely more. Men may be in need of you and me; but the best use we can make of ourselves is to tell them about the redeeming Lord. In the gospel of his grace there is heat enough to get through the coldest clod. When everything else has failed, or acts only as an opiate to deepen the slumber of the sleeper. the gospel of Christ will get through and awake him out of his sleep. If every man is to be perfected we must first of all preach a living and saving Christ.

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Rev. George C. McKiernan used the following in setting forth this truth: Throughout one's life here Satan continues to harass and tempt and annoy, trying by any means to induce one to return to sin and to a life of rebellion against God. But the power that saves is also a power that can protect against satanic influence and finally present the saved one "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

And thus one's Christian character is developed to stalwartness and power, gradually becoming more and more like the character of Jesus Christ. That this might be true for each of us, there is need that we know Jesus as a companion; that we walk in close fellowship with him in the daily life; that we take him with us into our family, business and social relations, and that we forego the pleasures of the world that have a tendency to keep us from distinct separation from those who repudiate the love of God. The affections of the Christian should be on things above, not on things of the earth; on things eternal, not on things temporal; on things which abide, not on things which are only transient. It has been suggested that to ascend in a balloon one must throw out the sand or the ballast; and to ascend in Christian character and influence one must discard those things which hold him with relentless grasp

to the ways of the world. There is a quaint, homely story told of a soldier who said to his commanding officer, "I have taken a prisoner." "Bring him along with you," replied the officer. "He won't let me," answered the soldier. "Come yourself, then," said his superior. "I can't," said the soldier. This represents to a nicety the sad condition of many professed Christians. They cannot take the world with them into the Kingdom and they cannot break away from the world that they might enter the Kingdom of God themselves. Separation from the world is demanded of conversion, and a continued separation from the world is insisted upon that the Christian may grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of his Saviour and into his likeness.

* * *

Rev. Dr. Kelley said: Spurgeon quoted these lines in a sermon I heard him preach:

The king is come to marshal us, in all his armor drest;
And he has bound a snow-white plume upon his gallant crest.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line, a deafening shout: "God save our lord the king!"

And then King Henry, speaking to his army, said:

"And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may,
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray,
Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks of war.
And be your oriflamme today the helmet of Navarre."

And then Spurgeon held up Christ as the divine Captain, the leader who goes forth to certain conquest, who should kindle our souls and our devotion a thousandfold more than any human leader that ever called men to his standard.

Dear young people, rich and fine with the learning of the schools and the discipline of training; now, when the call is sounding,

"The Son of God goes forth to war;
Who fellows in his train?"

summon your whole being—"body, soul, and spirit," as the old knights used to say—to respond,

"Be swift, my soul, to answer him!
Be jubilant, my feet!"

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

What Men See When They Look (674).

Christ is to each what each has found him. To the soul that has sunk in the mire, he is a Saviour; to the intellect that has wrestled with doubt, he is a Guide; to the heart that has sorrowed he is a Comforter. Each should travel his appointed road and accept and employ the experience which it brings. It is thus that we grow in grace.—David Smith.

Looking Unto Jesus (675).

But all the while, did we only see,
We walk in the Lord's own company;
We fight, but 'tis he who nerves our arm;
He turns the arrows which else might harm.
And out of the storm he brings a calm.

The work which we count so hard to do,
He makes it easy, for he works too;
The days that are long to live are his,
A bit of his bright eternities,
And close to our need his helping is.

—Henry Van Dyke, D.D.

Assimilation (676).

If we would be much like Christ, we must be much with him. If we would become transformed into his image, thoroughly made over so as to be hardly recognizable for the same, we must "with unveiled face" and unclosed eye and untiring mind and uncorrupted will tarry in his presence and look long at his glory. There is no other method. We come thus to take his point of vision in our perception of things; we acquire his habit of mind; we catch his tone; we reflect his views; we adopt his policy; we unconsciously imitate his ways. His words sing into our soul; his plans take possession of us; his very glance inspires us; his inmost purposes become our own; and, scarcely conscious of the process, without knowing when or how, we find ourselves merged into his being, copies of his character. It is somewhat thus that a devoted wife comes in time closely to resemble her husband even in face, a son the revered father, a student the adored instructor. It is not a process that can be very much hurried. Some plates are more sensitive than others to such impression. Our part is to cultivate the sensitiveness and see that there is no intermission in the exposure. Given time enough, together with steadfast resolution and a vigorous use of every available means, and the results are both sure and amazing.—Pittsburgh Christian Advocate.

Fellowship With Christ (677).

The upward way never grows easy. There is always the cross to carry, the burden to bear. But there is joy in the new views that we obtain as we climb higher and higher. There is a sense of satisfaction that we are counted worthy to enter new fields of service and to have new fellowship with the Saviour in his sufferings. And as we ascend in this upward way, a truer, deeper love for God and for man fills our souls, and the blessing of a nobler, brighter, stronger, happier life settles down upon our spirits.—Selected.

The Only Remedy (678).

It is no use to flog, flog, flog at idle Christians and try to make them work. There is only one thing that will set them to work, and that is that they shall live nearer their Master and find out more of what they owe to him; and so render themselves up to be his instruments for any purpose for which he may choose to use them.—Alexander Maclaren.

What the Vision Costs (679).

O thou who art the ideal of what I ought to be, the ideal of what my Father would have me to be, come into my soul and shine! Give me one glimpse of the brightness of thy glory! I know it will send me, not peace, but a sword; I know it will strike me blind to all that I once thought beautiful. I shall never again prize my attainments when I have

discerned thy splendor. What matter!—come, Lord Jesus! At the price of my own humiliation, come! Though my flower of self-esteem shall wither, though my pride of life shall fade, though my peace of ignorance shall vanish, come! Though my ocean shall dwindle to a pool, though my palace shall shrink into a hut, though my silver shall be tarnished and my gold shall lose its glow, come! Come, though thy shining be my shadow; come, though thy presence be my poverty; come, though the vision tell me I am vile! I would rather be humble in sight of the stars than proud in lighting my tapers. It is worth while to see my spots if I see them because of sunshine. It is worth while to hear my discords if I hear them because of harmony. It is worth while to find my darkness if I detect it by finding day. The rending of the heart will not ruffle me if it is rent by the dawning of thy Spirit.—George Matheson, D.D.

Our Pattern (680).

Consider Jesus, consider this "greatest of all believers," this perfect pattern of faith, this crowning and unquestionable instance of faith's trial and triumph. Consider him till you feel assured that this is the life for you, this the ideal you would fain realize. If you need encouragement—and who does not?—here you will find it. However dark and perplexed and slippery your way has become, however complicated and difficult and full of anxiety your life is, you need not be defeated.—Marcus Dods, D.D.

Christ Our Example (681).

The trivial things of life are to be guided and shaped by reference to the highest of all things, the example of Jesus Christ; and that in the whole depth of his humiliation, and even in regard to his cross and passion.—Alexander Maclaren.

Wanted Vision Seers (682).

O, for a new generation of day-dreamers, young men and maidens who shall behold visions, idealists who shall see themselves as the heroes of coming conflicts, the heroines of yet unwritten epics of triumphant compassion and stainless love. From their hearts shall spring the renaissance of faith and hope. The ancient charm of true romance shall flow forth again to glorify the world in the brightness of their ardent eyes—

"The light that never was on land or sea,
The consecration and the poet's dream."

As they go out from the fair gardens of a visionary youth into the wide, confused, turbulent field of life, they will bring with them the marching music of a high resolve. They will strive to fulfill the fine prophecy of their own best desires. They will not ask whether life is worth living—they will make it so. They will transform the sordid "struggle for existence" into a glorious effort to become that which they have admired and loved.—Henry Van Dyke, D.D.

The Living Christ Our Helper (683).

God does not wish men to be vanquished in one point, or in many. The purpose of the Christian religion is to keep men from being defeated, or if it finds them overcome, to enable them to win back their

victory. Christianity comes to the man standing in the bread line, and says to him, "God will help you to earn a decent living for yourself once more." Christianity comes to the man in State Prison, and offers him another chance to be honest, and to win the confidence of his fellows; Christianity comes to the drug-fiend and the drunkard, promising them victory over their morbid appetites; Christianity comes to the man with a violent temper, and offers him a bit and bridle.

The trouble with us is that while we realize how strong the foes of character are, and how easily they get the upper hand of us, we forget God, we forget that there is unlimited power at our disposal.

It is not enough for us to have a high purpose, it is not enough for us to keep the life of Christ ever before us as our example, and his words as our guide. A great many people, of whom these things are true, are still very far from victorious. What they forget is that Jesus Christ is not dead, but alive. The same personality who in Palestine, nineteen hundred years ago, opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped deaf ears, and healed the sick, is still with us, though unseen.—Rev. James Elmer Russell.

The Perfect Pattern (684).

What is this pattern of virtuous living that is practically acknowledged by every one today? Nothing other than the type of man whom Jesus exalted and whom Jesus makes. Put together all that the ethical societies, the books on morals and the good-citizenship propagandas say concerning right living and human service, and you will be struck by the fact that Jesus long ago outlined the same sort of an ideal individual, and that he has been for nineteen centuries producing, not a great many, perhaps, compared with vast millions of the world's population, but certainly enough to preserve the type. And the deeper one goes into the personal life with Jesus, the more one seeks to live daily in the spirit of the fifteenth chapter of St. John, the better man he is sure to be.—H. A. Bridgman.

XC. THE CHANGING YEARS AND THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever."—Hebrews 13:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, in a sermon on "Life's Vicissitudes and How to Meet Them," said:

I. It would often seem as though things mistook their season, falling out with painful untimeliness. Anxieties natural to mature life trouble youth, the disabilities of age mar manhood, and the troubles that we might reasonably suppose to pass with our noon revive to add consternation and bitterness to our closing years. We are confounded by a sunken rock in a smooth sea, by a thunderbolt out of a blue sky, by frost in the time of roses. Adversity comes in unexpected forms. The strong develop a diseased organ; the trusted friend betrays; the staff on which we lean pierces the hand; gilt securities change into waste paper; the popular candidate is defeated; the rock on which we built proves a stone of emptiness; the gate of the churchyard receives the desire of our eyes; the brightest of sunshine is suddenly succeeded by the deepest of shadows. Adversity comes in unexpected ways. It is looked for on the highway, and it crosses the fields. It gets at us by crooked pathways of which we could never have dreamed.

II. To this extent, then, are we the sport of circumstance. We are challenged by losses and sorrows that no shrewdness could predict, no prudence provide against, no intervention break or soften. The almanac foretells the order of the seasons, the eclipses of sun and moon, the changes of the weather, but furnishes no hint of the vicissitudes which agitate our hearts and homes. The uncertainty of life is a tremendous and dangerous fact, dashing the cup from our lip, quenching in the blackness of night brilliant hopes.

III. The sense of uncertainty puts us altogether into the hand of God, and makes us to possess all the treasures of his purpose. And whatever the surprise or the shock may be, it will equally avail if we accept it faithfully and hopefully. "All things work together for good to them that love God;" things "not looked for" amongst the rest. He who, "missing of his design, lays hold with ready hand on the unexpected event, and turns it to his own account," is the brave, wise servant, "taking his revenge on fortune." Heaven often disappoints because it has prepared some better thing for us. Let us, therefore, boldly hail all events. The native vessels which sail the White Sea are so built and rigged that they can take advantage only of winds blowing from half the points of the compass. On the other hand, modern ships are so constructed that every wind that blows serves them. Souls ought to possess a similarly catholic and elastic responsiveness. They may if they have found their point of poise in the unchanging Christ.

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Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren opened up the text along the following lines:

I. The unchanging Christ in his relation to our changeful lives. The one thing of which anticipation may be sure is, that nothing continues in one way. There is only one thing that will enable us to front the else intolerable certainty of uncertainty, and that is to fall back upon the thought of my text.

II. Think of the relation between the unchanging Christ and the dying helpers. Just as on the face of some great wooded cliff, when the leaves drop, the solemn strength of the everlasting rock becomes evident, so, when our dear ones fall away, Jesus Christ is revealed, "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

III. We may apply the thought to the relation between the unchanging Christ and decaying institutions and opinions. His sameness is consistent with an infinite unfolding of new preciousness and new powers as new generations with new questions arise, and the world seeks for fresh guidance.

IV. Look at the words in their application to the relation between the unchanging Christ and the eternal love of heaven. It will be the same Christ, the Mediator, the Revealer, in heaven as on earth, whom we here dimly saw and knew to be the sun of our souls through the clouds and mists of earth.

* * *

Urging men to face the New Year in dependence upon the unfailing Christ, Rev. R. P. Anderson said: Carlyle accompanied his friend to the door. It was night, and both men lifted their eyes to the starry heavens.

"It's a grand sight," said the one.

"Man, it's just dreadful," replied the old philosopher.

The same feeling of awe in the presence of immensity made David cry, "What is man?"

Nobody knows. Man himself is overwhelmed and quite unable to answer. As he looks out upon infinity and views the whirling worlds around him, as he marks the swift and irresistible onrush of time, he feels himself like a fly on the rim of a gigantic wheel, forever staggering upon the verge of tragedy.

How different is the sweet and happy attitude of Jesus! He looks, not at the smallness of man in comparison with the vastness of creation, but at the greatness and the kindness of God. These diamond worlds! God made them. This swift-moving stream of years! God rules it. And God is my Father!

Go into the new year with the mind filled with your insignificance, and despair will lay its icy hand upon your heart, and you will cry: "It's dreadful! What is the use? What is man?" But face the new year with the joyous cry, "My Father," on your lips, and with your eye fixed on his pitying love and unfailing tenderness, and your soul will be flooded with sunshine and courage and faith.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Life's Vicissitudes (685).

Some years ago Oxford, England, celebrated its 1000th anniversary

by presenting, in a great pageant, scenes from its history. An eye witness described it in The Continent.

Between the spectators and the river was a green meadow about one hundred yards wide. Across the river, connected with the nearer lawn by an arched bridge of stone, was a meadow containing thirty or forty acres surrounded by a well-simulated mediæval wall and entered from the right by means of a battlemented gateway. Here hundreds of horsemen or thousands of footmen might be deployed, while the trees and shrubs growing luxuriantly along the river banks formed "wings" to the stage of this marvelous amphitheater.

The history of Oxford begins with the founding of a convent here in 727 A. D., by Frideswide, daughter of a king of the Mercians, whose flight from the amorous Algar and rescue by miraculous intervention gave opportunity for the representation of the simple life of England in those far away days.

Then followed in quick succession the crowning of Harold, in 1066, the founding of the first school in 1110, the granting of a charter to the city in 1160 by Henry II, and the hard fought battle of St. Scholastica's Day when "town and gown" had a rough-and-tumble fight which nearly cost the city its municipal freedom.

One of the most sumptuous scenes was that representing the visit of Henry VIII to Oxford, when he conferred with Cardinal Wolsey in relation to broadening the culture and enriching the endowments of the university.

For three hours in rapid, kaleidoscopic changes the marvelous history was lived over again. Peasants and princes, scholars and boors, soldiers and civilians, marched across the stage. The cavalier shook out his lovelocks and the roundhead in varied ranks marched to his own psalm-singing, "Let God arise, let all his enemies be scattered." And when at the close all the 3,000 performers massed before the thousands of spectators, there came the most impressive moment of the pageant.

Silently, from the right of the grounds, Father Time, dressed in long, black robes, bearing scythe and hourglass high in air, entered. His eye swept over the multitudinous and splendid assemblage before him. Four buglers standing upon the further bank of the river raised their bannered trumpets and there pealed forth the solemn strains of the well known hymn,

"Time like an overflowing stream
Bears all our lives away,"—

Silently, slowly, irresistibly, the wise and the fool, the powerful and the prisoner, the woman in scarlet and the nun in white, moved up to the bridge and across the dividing stream, waved on by Time, while the spectators rose and stood in silence with brimming eyes to see how "they shall all lie down alike in silence and the worms shall cover them." It was the ninetieth psalm in dramatic form.

The Changing Years and the Changeless Christ (686).

I recently turned the pages of a gazetteer, giving a series of maps of Europe, showing it in the different centuries, the 20th, 19th, 15th, etc., back to the 5th before Christ. The changes were almost incredible.

in the outlines of kingdoms, in the names of cities, provinces, empires, mountains and rivers. But the one fact impressed me most was that all through the series there was the Eternal City, on the banks of the yellow Tiber, unaffected by the vicissitudes of the passing centuries. What Rome has been in relation to the geography of Europe the Lord Jesus Christ is to the geography of life; the one fixed point amid endless evanescence.

This Fleeting Life (687).

To the little child, this earth-life seems like eternity. The days pass by quickly enough, but the months and the years seem interminable. But childhood goes by with a rush and a whirl, and is gone before we realize it. Gray hairs are scattered upon our heads before we know it. Some day you go back to your childhood's home, and, forgetting what havoc time has wrought, you expect to see things as you left them years ago. And you find that most of those with whom you mingled are laid away in some God's Acre, their children are men and women, and their children are playing about their knees. Everything is changed. And you almost wish you had not come; you begin to understand what Lyte meant when he wrote:

"Change and decay in all around I see."
God grant that you may be able to echo his other line.
"Oh, thou that changest not, abide with me."

We Change But Christ Does Not (688).

The pavements we walk upon, the coals in our grates—how many millenniums old are they? The pebble you kick aside with your foot—how many generations will it outlast? Go into a museum and you will see hanging there, little the worse for centuries, battered shields, notched swords, and gaping helmets—aye, but what has become of the bright eyes that once flashed the light of battle through the bars, what has become of the strong hands that once gripped the hilts? "The knights are dust," and "their good swords are" not "rust." The material lasts after its owner. Seed corn is found in a mummy case. The form beneath the painted lid is brown and hard, and more than half of it gone to pungent powder, and the man that once lived has faded utterly; but the handful of seed has its mysterious life in it, and when it is sown, in due time the green blade pushed above English soil, as it would have done under the shadow of the pyramids four thousand years ago—and its produce waves in a hundred harvest fields today. The money in your purses now, will some of it bear the head of a king that died half a century ago? It is bright and useful—where are all the people that in turn said they "owned" it? Other men will live in our houses, will preach from this pulpit, and sit in these pews when you and I are far away. And other June days will come, and the old rose-trees will flower round houses where unborn men will then be living, when the present possessor is gone to nourish the roots of the roses in the graveyard! —Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

XCI. FAITH'S FRUITAGE.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."—James 2:17.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Faith must be translated into deeds if it is to be a permanent possession.

I. The highest happiness comes not by what we hear or see or feel—it comes by what we do. What shall it profit a man though he hear great music and read great books and have his soul stirred by the appeal of some prophet of the living God, unless as a result of it all he goes out and does something? If you hear and feel and see, happy are ye if ye do, and only then.

II. "The criticism of the next generation upon this," some wise man has said, "will be, 'How plainly they saw their problems, how ineffective they were in solving them.'" The arraignment is too sweeping, but in many quarters the eyes see and the ears hear, but feet and hands are not ready to go in the way of achievement.

III. Jacob Riis shows us "How the Other Half Lives," but thousands of the more fortunate decline the huge task of helping to change the hard lot of their unhappy fellows. Booker Washington in "Up from Slavery" shows us a vision of a backward race ennobled by training, but thousands of white men forget to lend a hand. John Spargo utters "The Cry of the Children," for there are two millions of them under sixteen years of age working at gainful occupations in our own land according to the government census, but the lack of resolute action to stop this physical, mental and moral depletion of the immature is disgraceful. Lincoln Steffens shows up "The Shame of the Cities" and it brings a blush to the face of many a patriot, but when the task of removing that shame begins to make demands upon the time and strength men are giving to their private business, there are many whose love for righteousness waxes cold.

* * *

The age-long controversy over the relative importance of faith and works is an instructive illustration of the pitfalls which beset us in the ambiguity of words and the futility of theological discussion without careful definition of terms.

I. That works alone, works without faith and love, are insufficient for salvation, are no ground for acceptance with God, is perfectly clear. But it is equally clear that we cannot be saved without works, that a living faith will speedily evidence itself in deeds, that a Christian life so devoid of gratitude as not to be marked by labor for the Lord, is fatally defective. Although we may enter into life by faith alone, we certainly cannot continue therein without doing good as we have opportunity. Our desire to flee from the wrath to come, if it be genuine and really fixed in the soul, will be shown by its fruits. We are saved by grace, through faith, according to our works.

II. There is pressing need in almost every Christian life of larger

activity, more strenuous service, a closer filling out of the days with good deeds. It was said of the Master, summing up his career, "He went about doing good, for God was with him." Is it said of us? And can God be with us on any other basis? "God hath ordained," the apostle says, "that we should walk in good works," that we are to be "fruitful in every good work," "rich in good works," "zealous of good works," "filled with the fruits of righteousness." We are bidden to "trust in the Lord, and do good." "provoking one another to love and good works." Scripture is very plain and prolific on this head. The Master made it exceedingly clear to his followers that whatever else was absent activity for God must be present. "What do ye more than others?" was his pointed inquiry. To be "workers together with him," to have a love "in deed and in truth" instead of in word and tongue simply, to be "ready for every good word and work" are the terse characterizations of genuine disciples.—From "The Riches of His Grace."

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Faith Expressing Itself in Service (689).

Some years ago a woman came to me at the close of the Sunday morning service, and said, "O, I would give anything to be in this work actively and actually. I would give anything to have some living part in the work which is going on here next week in winning men and women to Christ, but I do not know what to do." I said, "My sister, are you prepared to give the Master the five loaves and two fishes you possess?" She said, "I do not know that I have five loaves and two fishes." I said, "Have you anything which you have used in any way specially?" "No," she did not think she had. "Well," I said, "can you sing?" Her reply was "Yes, I sing at home, and I have sung before now in an entertainment." "Well, now," I said, "will you give the Lord your voice for the next ten days?" She said, "I will." I shall never forget that Sunday evening. I asked her to sing, and she sang. She sang the gospel message with the voice she had, and that night there came out of that meeting into the inquiry room one man. That man said to me afterwards that it was the gospel that was sung which reached his heart; and from that day to this—that is now eleven or twelve years ago—that man has been one of the mightiest workers for God in that city and country I have ever known. How was it done? A woman gave the Master what she had.

Are we willing to give the Master what we have? If so, there will be a harvest of glorious surprises in the immediate future. There is not a talentless man or woman in the world.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Unfruitful Faith (690).

I read the other day in a paper that a Hindoo will pass an examination in science; he understands sanitary laws perfectly, but some way or other he never seems to understand how to apply them. He will go complacently into his own dirty compound and break every sanitary law of which he is theoretically master. But you need not go to India to find a thing of that kind. You will find many men in this country who know the Lord's will, but who never dream of doing it.—Watkinson.

We Have to be "Thrust Forth" (691).

I have come to believe this to be almost invariably true, that seldom is anything good proposed to us but we have something to object to it at first. This seems to be the reason for the expression used by our Lord, "Thrust forth laborers." We are all unwilling to go. The truth is, we are all a little lazy. We need to be "thrust forth."—Andrew Bonar.

The Evidence of Christianity (692).

The fruits of the Spirit are the only evidence of a man's being a true Christian. Where there is no fruit there is no vital union to Christ. A person may be a Christian in name and have a nominal union to Christ, but there will be no fruit. Fruit must be seen in holiness of life and character. He that is destitute of these is "dead while he liveth." —James M. Hoadley, D.D.

How Faith Shines (693).

In the Greek Church in Jerusalem they have a ceremony by which they celebrate the coming of the divine influence to earth, which, while to be utterly condemned because of the ecclesiastical hocus pocus involved, possesses value as a startling illustration of an important truth. While the priests, in full canonicals, are ministering at the altar, and the crowd is waiting with bated breath and holding unlighted torches, suddenly, from some crypt beneath the altar a blazing torch is stretched forth, and, in a moment, all is uproar. Men struggle for the privilege of lighting their torches at this mysterious fire—supposedly from heaven. As soon as they are lighted the bearers rush forth into the streets where long lines of other torch-bearers stand waiting to kindle their torches from those lighted at the sacred fire, as the runners speed along. And after a little, men with torches scattered all over the city, and additional torches are constantly lighted by those they bear.

It is all rankest superstition, of course. But it is also a spectacular setting forth, by striking illustration, of what consecrated personality may be made to mean.

The Missing Stone (694).

A man dreamed that when he died he was taken by the angels to a beautiful temple. After admiring it for a time, he discovered that one stone was missing. All finished but just one little stone; that was left out. He said to the angel, "What is this stone left out for?" The angel replied, "That was left out for you, but you were waiting to do great things, and so this was never finished." He was startled and awoke, and resolved that he would become a faithful worker for God in little things.—Moody.

Living Our Belief (695). The Chinese whose quaint confession of faith, was, "I am reading the Bible now and behaving it," had a better conception of what is involved in being a Christian than many professed believers of long standing.—Outlook.

Faith's Melody and Life's Task (696).

Standing on the busy corner of Boylston and Arlington streets, in Boston, is a church made famous by the ministry of great men. Its

spire is characteristic of the architecture of the last century, and elevates the clock that it bears far above the street. This clock, though out of range of the convenient glance of crowds, fulfills its purpose nobly. Each hour it reminds hurrying men of the passing time, not with monotonous beats alone, but by chiming a brief strain out of some song made sacred to the heart of the multitude by the grace of God. What an exalted idea the mechanic has thus embodied in the construction of this clock! What incalculable blessing would result if we should as implicitly respond to the plans of the Infinite Designer and combine with life's dull tasks a strain of Christian melody reminding men of the true and unfailing source of the sweetest harmonies.—Western Christian Advocate.

Christian Activity (697).

I do not see how Christianity is ever to carry the day, unless the great bulk of our church membership becomes also a ministry. By this I mean, not merely the passive ministry of character, though that is much, but active, personal concern and direct personal service of some sort, aiming to make others happier, wiser and better; every believer a witness, every new recruit himself a recruiter.—Roswell D. Hitchcock.

The Day Will Show (698).

The test of character for us lies not in the things that we hear, but in the things that we do. A servant in Scotland went to a gospel meeting, where she professed to have received great help. When she got home she said to her mistress, "Oh, I have got such a blessing at the meeting." "Ah, well," was the cautious reply of her mistress, "we shall see in the morning, Lizzie, whether it is or no." The morning's work would give token of the reality of the blessing. We need a religion that will do more than arouse emotions. We want one that will produce holy conduct.—The Christian Advocate

XCII. "JOY UNSPEAKABLE."

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—1 Peter 1:8.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

I. Happiness is inward not outward. It depends upon what we know, not upon what we have.

II. Happiness is an incident and a result, not an aim; it can never be had by direct seeking, but by setting our faces toward the things from which it flows.

III. Happiness is not solitary but social; it can be had only by those who share it.

IV. The Divine Will is the law of life; we find our happiness in surrender and obedience. The love of Christ in the heart is the spring of joy in the life.—Selected.

* * *

Rev. Alfred L. Hall-Guest said on this subject of rejoicing in Christ:

I. Do not rejoice in your circumstances. They fluctuate. Today you have much; tomorrow you may have less. If the source of your joy lies in these fluctuating conditions it is very evident that you will have many days of gloom and fret. And yet there are thousands of men and women who do this very thing. They are the poor comforters for others of their ilk. They are unjust to their own better natures, and only too true is the fact that they dishonor God by allowing the flitting birds of circumstances to unmake their joys.

II. Do not rejoice in your environment. It, too, will change. We can say often that our lines have fallen in pleasant places, but the neighborhood changes, a closer acquaintance shows many ugly features in the environment, and what appeared as lovely and joy-giving becomes a serious obstacle to joy.

III. Do not rejoice in friendships. I explain, all friendships are not true. In your eagerness to have friends, perhaps you are careless in your choice and overly sanguine of the joy to be had in the new fellowship. There are real friends, and in them one can truly rejoice, but they do not carry their real selves as walking advertisers do their signs. People are so disappointing. I suppose you have discovered that. A few months following will make threadbare many friendships. They are like some grades of carpet. There are ingrain and Brussels and Axminster and Wiltonlike friendships, and also those of the genuine Turkish Rug variety, not of a perfect design or weaving, but nevertheless genuine in workmanship; costly because rare.

IV. But consider the positive side. Rejoice in Him whom though not having seen, ye love.

* * *

A Program for a Joyful Life.

The following noble schedule is by Rev. Charles M. Sheldon:

I. I will try to do God's will every day.

II. I will try to see the good in the world and in my neighbor.

III. I will not worry over matters I cannot help and over those I can help I do not need to worry.

IV. I will keep my mind and heart in touch with the great things of the universe.

V. I will learn to enjoy the free gifts of God to men, like nature and the facts of physical powers.

VI. I will learn to prize all my human friendships.

VII. I will help some one to a happier life every day.

VIII. I will magnify my place in the kingdom of God.

IX. I will enjoy the friendship of Christ as my Redeemer and Brother.

"Hope thou in God."
"Rejoice in the Lord always."

* * *

Rev. Frederick W. Lynch, commenting on this theme in The Congregationalist, emphasizes these points:

I. The Happy Christian. The note of joy runs through the Epistles of Paul and Peter as a theme of music through a symphony. The outstanding characteristic of the early Christians was the new joy that possessed them. Their meetings, even when in secret caves and attics, were love-feasts and times of praise. The fragments of the earliest hymns are all joy-songs. The chapter of Peter on which our lesson is based is a hymn of joy and gives the grounds of the Christian's joy. A Christian should always be happy, because he had been raised from the dead to the promise of an inheritance incorruptible, sure and enduring forever. He should be happy because, whatever trials he may have to endure, he is sustained and kept inviolate by the power of God. He should be happy because God deemed him of enough worth to redeem him by the life of his own Son, and ordered all the processes of the universe to make him holy. The secret of joy is the consciousness of God.

II. The Winning Power of Joy. It was the joyousness of the best Christians that attracted the non-Christian world. There is ample testimony to this in the beginnings of Christianity in Rome. The Roman was stoical, not ebullient in his nature. He suffered nobly often, and endured with a grim patience, but his heart never bubbled over with the joy of an unfettered soul, with the ecstasy of one who saw the heavens opening in the end. But the first manifestation of conversion which he witnessed in his neighbor was a radiant joyousness, a buoyant greeting of life, a triumphant not stoic endurance of all ill. This sunniness, this certitude that all things worked together for good won him to the new faith. It is proverbial that the happy countenance of the Salvation Army lassie has led thousands to inquire as to its source. (There is a beautiful presentation of this winning power of joy in the beginnings of the church in Tolstoi's great story, "Work While You Have the Light.")

III. Why Not Be Cheerful? Let us confess that it is hard sometimes. Let us even confess that sometimes our friend from whom cheerfulness sticks out at all times like porcupine quills irritates us a little, and

makes us remember the words of that dear old pessimist of Ecclesiastes, that there is a time to weep as well as a time to laugh, a time to mourn as well as a time to dance. As a pastor I have sometimes mistrusted the man who too glibly told me that his wife's death was the will of God, and kept cheerful beyond seemliness. I looked for a speedy second marriage and generally saw it. And yet, who in this world has reason for cheerfulness if not the Christian? Can he not hourly say in Whittier's beautiful words:

"I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

The quest of the Christian should not be first for cheerfulness. Books on "Don't Worry" will not help him much. Seek first God—a deep consciousness of God—then all else will follow.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Joy. A Word Study (699).

Tracing the word joy back through modern languages to its derivation, we find it in French, Spanish, Italian and, finally, in the Latin tongue. It seems to be best described by its Spanish synonym of a jewel. If one looks into the heart of the ruby, the depths of the emerald, or the shimmer of the pearl; if one turns a diamond back and forth in the sun, one catches something of the singular charm of imprisoned light.

Joy has this flash of the sunbeam on our way. A child's joy is spontaneous; the child has no care about daily bread, raiment or shelter. The child plays without fear for tomorrow. It was not to little children that our Lord said: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," nor are children, except when they have been despoiled of their heritage by the iron hand of greed and the weight of premature labor, ever afraid of what the morrow will bring.

Joy in work is the condition which the jewel might suggest, the jewel itself being in part the product of skill and thoughtful toil. Let us ask ourselves whether we are living in that state of contentment and acquiesence with the Divine Will which enables us to be contsantly joyful and, so to speak, entitles us to wear the jewel of joy as a daily ornament.—Selected.

True Joy (700).

Much that we call gladness is not gladness at all. It is too superficial to be worthy the name. The old Roman philosopher, Seneca, had the right of it when he said, "True joy is a serene and sober motion; and they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing; the seat of it is within." In harmony with this is the sentiment of Robert Burns, which I remember seeing inscribed upon the pedestal of his monument in the public square of Dumfries, Scotland:

"The heart's aye the part aye
That makes us richt or wrang."

For true happiness comes from a deep well, and that well must be a well of righteousness, of right relations with God and man. All other happiness is transient and superficial.—Rev. John Y. Ewart, D.D.

Be of Good Cheer (701).

On the eve of his crucifixion, when the clouds were black and threatening, Jesus comforted his disciples with those ever-memorable words: "Let not your heart be troubled. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." And Paul, in prison awaiting death, cheered his fellow Christians on to a life of heroic endurance by the inspiring exhortation: "Rejoice, evermore, and again I say unto you, Rejoice." Christianity is a religion of hope. When we enter upon the new life we are "begotten again into a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." "Hope," says one, "gives sanity and good health; it doubles the value of food and sleep, lightens every care and gives the heart courage for all its tasks."—Selected.

Joy Finds a Home (702).

Not long ago there was a touching story in one of the Chicago daily papers about a little boy who was without any home. His name was Joy. He had lost both his parents, and then his guardian had died, so that at five years old he was left homeless for the second time. He had no living relatives.

Immediately telephone calls, telegrams and personal inquiries poured in on the newspaper. Hundreds of homes were open to Joy; not in charity, but because those who asked for him really wanted to make him their son. The editors of the newspaper were deeply touched by the eager, spontaneous cry that came to them—the call of the childless homes.

Some of the people who wanted to adopt Joy were rich; some were well-to-do; others were in moderate circumstances, and some were poor. The paper made a careful investigation, and selected a few of the most suitable families. From among these it asked Joy to choose his home.

Joy started out with a representative of the newspaper, and visited one home after another. For two days the little fellow was undecided. The whole city became eager to know what his choice would be, and the suspense of the childless families who hoped for him was touching. On the third day Joy visited a home he had not previously seen. It was a home of a very modest sort—comfortable enough, but with no sign of wealth, and no offer of luxury. The woman came down the hall as the little boy came in at the front door. She spoke one word: "Joy!" Instantly the little fellow ran to her, and as she caught him up, he threw his arms about her neck.

Joy had found a mother, and the woman's hungry heart had found a son. And all the city who had watched the drama said how fortunate was this woman, who had no great wealth to offer, and who had yet won the little fellow's heart.

But it was not luck or childish caprice that settled the question. The woman had loved children all her life, and had given her time and thought and such means as she had to making them happy and good. She had loved children and worked for them, and the sign of it was upon her face and in her voice. The little boy knew as soon as he saw her that she was the best mother of them all for him.

In that way, so indirectly that it often seems accidental, we get our richest compensation for love and service and right living. Upon what we have been depends what we are to get.

The Christian's Joy Unspeakable (703).

God made us to be happy. Many of us who would not range ourselves with the hermit or the Puritan are afraid of good things. If God places a cup in our hand, brimming with happiness, we put it to our lips with a trembling grasp, and dread lest we may be having too much happiness. We never expect to have a day of perfect pleasure; we think it would be too good to hope for; there will always be some freckle in the lily, some thorn in the rose, some cloud in the sky. When we take our joys, it is with foreboding. We tread the happy path with fear. Or, if we let ourselves go, and have one long, blessed day; if we let ourselves go into a friendship, and drink and drink again; if we allow ourselves to delight in some avocation, accomplishment or interest, we always fear that there will be a rebate; and that after some days or weeks have passed, God, who can not trust us with too much joy, will see to it that our life is plunged in gloom and sorrow to make an equivalent.

If there be a burst of sunshine, we go about the world, saying: "You may depend upon it, we shall have to pay for this." This spirit is perpetually casting a shadow over our happiest days. The mother takes the little child in a perfect ecstasy to her bosom, but as she looks upon its face, she says to herself: "I must not be too happy, for fear God will take him away." The young man who recognizes his twin soul says to himself: "I must not be too happy, for such happiness as this can not last." This is the way so many of us go through life—afraid to drink the cups of joy which are ready in our hand.

There is another phase of this same experience—we shut ourselves up with our sorrow. And yet the darkest day that ever came had some alleviation; the saddest hour that ever struck had something in it to make life possible; but too often we wrap the mantle of grief around our person, and, although the child's hand reaches out its flowers, although the sky sends down a glint of smiling sunshine, although there is wafted to us some beautiful burst of music, which should lift us upon its wing, we shut ourselves up in our sorrow and say: "No, we are too down and dull today to be able to entertain and accept joy." How often the good love of God, though all around our path, is sent away abashed, disappointed and thwarted. Thus all our life is needlessly shadowed by constant prohibition.—Rev. F. B. Meyer.

In Whom Believing Ye Rejoice (704).

Romanes, the gifted scientist, who traveled into infidelity and then back again, found, as the result of his experience, that "the nature of man without God is thoroughly miserable." It is the business of religion to bring the two together.—Rev. J. Brierly.

Christian Joy (705).

Christian joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. It is not made to order. It is not an automatic arrangement of grace. It is a divine gift, divinely born and divinely imparted, divinely nourished and divinely perpetuated. It is not dependent on external conditions, but rather upon internal possessions—possessions of grace, divine favor, divine peace, divine assurance, uninterrupted fellowship with God. abiding companionship with

Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Joy is more than mere happiness. Happiness fluctuates, is influenced by circumstances, by external conditions, but genuine Christian joy, while it produces exuberance, is, nevertheless, an abiding grace, increasing under trials rather than diminishing, for it abounds wherever Christ abounds. Paul and Silas knew what it meant and did for them in the Philippian jail, Daniel in the lions' den, Luther in the Wartburg, Bunyan in Bedford jail, Christ in the Garden and upon Calvary, for "He endured the cross and despised the shame" because of "the joy that was set before him." The joy of being found in the path of duty, the joy of anticipated triumph, the joy of assurance of the effectiveness of his atoning death and victorious resurrection, the joy of satisfied justice, the joy of routing sin, and the joy of populating heaven with souls washed in his blood, from among all nations, kindreds and tongues.

The things which Jesus had spoken of to his disciples should be the productive source of their joy. The word of pardon proceeding from his lips and lodging in our hearts produces joy. What a joy to be redeemed from sin, what a joy to be adopted into the family of God. What a joy to be in harmony with God, to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. What a joy to have one's interests linked with the interests of God. What a joy to abide in Christ and have his words abide in us! All "these things" produce a joy unspeakable and full of glory.—Selected

XCIII. THE CURE FOR CARE.

"Casting all your care on him; for he careth for you."—1 Peter 5:7.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

On this text Rev. F. B. Meyer said:

I. The Greek verb indicates not that we must keep doing it, but do it once for all.

Who does not know what it is to awake in the morning with a sense of heaviness and depression, and, before one is well aroused, to be conscious of a voice whispering a long tale of burdens to be carried, and difficulties to be met, as the hours pass on!

"Ah," says the voice, "a miserable day will this be."

"How so?" we inquire, fearfully.

"Remember, there is that creditor to meet, that skein to disentangle, that irritation to soothe, those violent tempers to confront. It is no use praying, better linger longer where you are, and drag through the day as you may. You are like a victim in the tumbril going to be guillotined."

And too often we have yielded to the suggestion. If we have prayed, it has been in a kind of hopeless way, asking God to help, but not daring to think he would. There has been no assurance, no confidence, no calm within, no tranquillity without. Alas for some! They always spend their lives thus. One long, weary monotone of anxiety—struggling against winds and waves, instead of walking over the crests of the billows; treading a difficult, stony pass, instead of being borne along in one of the twenty thousand chariots of God.

How infinitely better to cast our care upon the strong, broad shoulders of Christ! Treat cares as you treat sins. Hand them over to Jesus one by one as they occur. Commit them to him. Roll them upon him. Make them his. By an act of faith look to him, saying, "Lord, Thou hast taken my sins; take my cares: I lay them upon thee, and trust thee to do for me all, and more than all, I need. I will trust, and not be afraid." As George Herbert says so quaintly in his sonnet, Put care into Christ's bag. There is no surer path to rest than to pass on to Jesus all the anxieties of life, believing that he takes what we give at the moment of our giving it; that it instantly becomes a matter of honor with him to do his best for us: and surely it is a sacrilege to take back any gift which we have put into his hands.

II. Do not be satisfied with rolling yourself on God, roll your burden also. He who can carry the one can carry the other. When a tiny boy, trying to help his father move his books, fell on the staircase beneath the weight of a heavy volume, his father ran to his aid and caught up in his arms boy and burden both, and carried them in his arms to his room. And will God deal worse with us? He cannot fail or forsake. He can smite rocks, and open seas, and unlock the treasuries of the air, and ransack the stores of the earth. Birds will bring meat, and fish coins, if he bid them. He takes up the isles as a very little thing—how easily.

then, your heaviest load: while there is nothing so trivial but that you may make it a matter of prayer and faith.

III. The reasonableness of this method of life. "For he careth for you." Of course, if we persist in acting only for ourselves, we must do the best we can for ourselves; but if we can hand over all matters to God, we shall find that he will do infinitely better for us than we had dared to hope. Such is God's love to us that he always goes far beyond our farthest anticipations. "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

If the father is providing for tomorrow's needs, why should his little boy leave his play, and lean pensively against the wall, wondering what had better be done? If the pilot has come on board, why should the captain also pace the deck with weary foot? If some wise, strong friend, thoroughly competent, has undertaken to adjust some difficult piece of perplexity for me, and if I have perfect confidence in him, and he assures me that he is well able to accomplish it, why should I interfere?

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Rev. Dr. George D. Mott's comment on this theme was: Whatever betide, we must not lose confidence in God. When Abraham departed from the home where he expected to spend his old age, and turned his face toward the unknown scenes of Canaan, God said, "Fear not, I am thy shield," and this same "fear not," like a soothing refrain, purls to the end of Holy Writ.

The world tries to cast away care. Hence the endeavor to drown it in pleasures, to neutralize it by absorption in business, to amuse it with the aims of ambition. But care thus cast away, often returns like a boomerang. Scripture tells us, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, he shall sustain thee." The care is a care. Often it is a painful reality. We must have prudent thought about temporal affairs, and about our families. Scripture has no encouragement for lazy people, but it abounds in consolation for the toiling children of men. Now the true course is, not to cast away that care, but to consign it to God, who is as deeply interested in the objects of our care as we are; whose wisdom will direct what is best for them, and whose power can secure the accomplishment. Cares tend to crossness. Let us sweeten each cup of bitterness by some promise of our heavenly Father.

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Rev. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage said: This is a tired world! Multitudes tired of body or tired of mind or tired of soul! Every one has a burden to carry, if not on one shoulder, then on the other. In the far East water is so scarce that if a man owns a well he is rich; and battles have been fought for the possession of a well of water. But every man owns a well, a deep well,—a well of tears. Chemists have tried to analyze a tear, and they say it is made of so much of this and so much of that, but they miss important ingredients. A tear is agony in solution. But by divine power it may be crystallized into spiritual wealth, and all burdens may be lifted. God is the rest of the soul that comes to him. He rests us by removing the weight of our sin, and by solacing our griefs with the thought that he knows what is best for his children. A wheat-sheaf cried out to the farmer, "Why do you smite me with that flail? What have I done that you should so cruelly pound me?" But when the straw had been

raked off the wheat and put in the mow, and the wheat had been winnowed by the mill and had been piled in rich and beautiful gold on either side the barn floor, then the straw looked down from the mow and saw the reason why the farmer had flailed the wheat-sheaf.

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Rev. Dr. F. Bottome said: In recently crossing the Atlantic a group of passengers after a violent storm huddled together on their steamer-chairs condoling with each other on their late fearful experiences, when a lady of the company addressed the captain, who had drawn near, and asked, "Captain, didn't you think we were going to the bottom?" Assuming an air of offended dignity, the master of the ship replied, "Madam, when I signed the ship's papers in the company's office, I agreed to carry this steamer across the Atlantic Ocean from Liverpool to New York. The bottom is not on my chart."

Now when Christ entered that ship in Galilee with his disciples his purpose was to cross the lake. The bottom was not on his chart. But he answered their fears and bade the wind and storm cease; and there was a great calm.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

The Fragrance of Faith (706).

Campbell Morgan says that he once went into the home of a gentleman who was entertaining him, and in one room he always detected the fragrance of roses, and he said to his host one day, "I wish you would tell me how it is that I never come into this room without seeming to detect the fragrance of roses."

The gentleman smiled and said: "Ten years ago I was in the Holy Land, and while there I bought a small phial of attar of roses. It was wrapped in cotton wool, and as I was standing here unpacking it, suddenly I broke the bottle. I took the whole thing up, cotton, wool and all, and put it into this vase." There stood a beautiful vase, and he lifted the lid, and the fragrance of roses filled the room. That fragrance had permeated the clay of the vase, and it was impossible to enter the room without consciousness of it. My friends, if Christ be in us, the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon will pervade and permeate our whole life. All that kind of fear that hath torment will disappear, and the love which beautifies and glorifies human living shall possess us, and make us a comfort and a blessing to all whose lives touch our own.—L. A. Banks.

Rest in Christ (707).

Robertson, of Brighton, once wrote to his brother: "For many years I have been seeking God. But I have just been awakened to the fact that all these years God has been seeking me." That is a precious hymn that begins "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea." But God's mercy is wider than the sea. It is the wideness of the universe. And it is Christ who comes to express it. Therefore accept Christ. Read about him. Think about him. Rest in him. Leave everything that concerns yourself with him. Do not look any longer at yourself. Look at Christ. Let yourself alone. Let your "feelings" and your fears go. Do not trouble yourself about yourself. Spend the rest of your days in sub-

mitting to Christ and you will soon be able to tell people, for their great good, what Christ can do for a soul that rests in him.—Bishop Vincent.

"The Lord Bore It" (708).

"Oh, Hannah, I do not see how you could bear so much sorrow!" "I did not bear it," was the quick reply, "the Lord bore it for me." "Yes," said the visitor, "that is the right way. You must take your troubles to the Lord." "Yes," replied Hannah, "but we must do more than that. We must leave them there. Most people," she continued, "take their burdens to him, but they bring them away with them again, and are just as worried and unhappy as ever. But I take mine and leave them with him, and come away and forget them. And if the worry comes back, I take it to him again. I do this over and over, until at last I just forget that I have any worries and am at perfect rest."—Hannah Whitall Smith.

The Curse of Care (709).

Worry breaks down our health and ill-health reacts upon the mental condition, and we worry more and more until we are unfitted for the enjoyment of life's pleasures, the meeting of its responsibilities, and the bearing of its burdens. Worry is also injurious to the spiritual life. Oftentimes the Word of God is choked out of our hearts by the cares of this life. Oftentimes our hearts are so full of worries about the things of this life that we have no time to think about the things of the life which is to come. The soul and body are intimately connected and the care and worry which produce ill-health in the body produce also disease in the soul. Languor of body produces languor of spirit, and physical dyspepsia results in spiritual discouragement, and a torpid liver is often responsible for doubts about the salvation of the soul. Worry is a sin against our spiritual life, because it substitutes doubt for faith, slothfulness for fervor in spirit, self-reliance for trust in God, conscience for Christ, and reliance upon our own wisdom for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.—The Presbyterian.

"Where anxiety begins faith ends."—Miller.

Let Him Bear You (710).

An officer who was engaged in the siege of Sebastopol tells the following incident: "My general wishing to send some orders to one of the regiments, I had to pass across an open space exposed to the full fire of the batteries. I got across in safety, and as I was coming back I saw a little drummer boy lying wounded, who, if he were left where he was lying, would almost to a certainty be killed. I went to him, and told him I was going to carry him back with me. He objected, and declared that I could not carry him. As I carried him, he was most restless, declaring he was too heavy, and tried constantly to put one foot to the ground 'to help us along,' as he said. All the time he kept on saying, 'I am sure I am too heavy for you, sir. Please let me try and walk myself.' At last I was obliged to put him down for a minute under the shelter of a large monument and tell him that he must keep quiet while I carried him, or he might sacrifice both our lives. With very great difficulty, on starting again, I got him to lie still in my arms, and was able to carry him to a

safe shelter. Next morning I went to the hospital to see how he was, and I then reminded him how difficult he had made it for me to help him, owing to his belief that, crippled though he was from his wound, he could yet do better for himself than by trusting entirely to me. 'Ah!' said he, looking up in my face with a smile, 'but I did not know, sir, as you was so strong!'" How often does the sinner hinder the Saviour's interposition through trying to help by his own work? Have we yet realized that he is "so strong?"—Sabbath Reading.

How Care Breeds (710a)

How care breeds about ourselves. We ask, "Have we decided this or that in the wisest way? If we could only get back to where the decision was forced on us!" But we cannot. I have stood by the great blast furnace, and have seen the molten iron break forth, as fluid, as water, so that it could be turned and shaped in any way; but in a moment it was fixed. So with our choices; they were for a moment in our power; now they are unchangeable. We cannot go back.

Here care breeds as to our future. Will this choice which I have made issue in what is best for me and for those whom I love?

Thus we see all about us the shapes of various cares.

When we have these cares upon us, let us remember what Peter says (1 Peter v. 7): "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." The word rendered "care" in the first clause means something which divides you, cuts you in twain, distracts you, which cuts your peace and joy in pieces. When I am confronted with cares, in the place where the ways meet, I become distracted. My life, instead of being strong and triumphant, becomes weak and broken.—Wayland Hoyt, D.D.

Trust (710b)

Beside my baby's crib at night, I lay upon my bed;
My little one could hear the storm, and feared the dark, she said,
The night was dark, the clouds were low, the storm's voice sounded wild,
So baby heart craved some one near, lest danger meet the child.
Yet not content, my baby girl, for me just near to linger,
Her tiny hand stole out the bed and clasped around my finger.
I could not chide, refuse her plaint, be hardened to her tears;
She understood no reasons why, so I must soothe her fears.

I, too, a child about to rest, my play and cares aside,
Can ask no dearer, sweeter boon than near Thee to abide.
The night is dark, the clouds are low, the storm to me is wild,
For I, too, know not reason why, since I am but Thy child.
My life, O Father, in Thy hand, may little be or much;
But I, Thy child, shall be content, if I may feel Thy touch.
Thou'll not withhold Thy care by night, by day Thy help divine;
And dark or cloud or storm are naught—my hand shall rest in Thine.

—A. J. Chapman.

XCIV. THE LURE OF THE WORLD.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1 John 2:15.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Preaching on the marks of the worldling, Archdeacon Sinclair, D.D., of London, lists the following four:

I. The self-denial of the cross is abhorrent to them. The cross of Christ checks us in every form of selfishness, not merely in grosser evils. We are to live, not for ourselves, but for others. We are to desire the progress and advancement of others rather than our own. Such ideas the man of the world can not understand at all. He lives for the aggrandizement and pleasure of himself and his family, and his expenses are only limited by his income. It is this kind of unchecked self-gratification and scorn of self-denial that makes even a well-balanced civilization difficult, and excites the toiling and indigent masses. It is hard for the genuine children of God, in the midst of this atmosphere of selfishness, to maintain the true ideal of self-denial in all things.

II. The next point is that these men become devotees of their appetites, passions and sensuality in general. The daily dinner-table looms large in their lives. Their God is their belly. They are always on the lookout for good things and the varied delights of self-indulgence.

The thirst for pleasurable sensations colors the whole day; they care nothing for aspiration, high thoughts, the love of man, a noble enterprise; all they desire is to have a good time. Even the affectionate feelings are perverted and dishonored by sensuality.

III. They are proud of this luxurious and selfish spirit, and disdainful of others who do not share it. "Their glory is in their shame." How well Paul knew the world! Who does not recollect occasions when the timid suggestions of Christian principle have been met with the well-bred stare or the polite laugh of better-informed contempt? Filled with self-satisfaction, confident that they know the ways of the world, and perfectly content with its cold, heartless, and unprincipled maxims, they are incapable of learning. The revelation of God in Christ, which is of transcendent importance for the true happiness of mankind, they treat with indulgent scorn as mere children's babble. Their selfishness is their pride, their freedom from scruple is their satisfaction, and their hardness of heart is their subject for daily congratulation. And there is great danger, when we are in the midst of such an atmosphere, of our thinking of the truths and principles revealed by our Lord as old-fashioned, visionary and unnecessary.

IV. They pay all their attention to earthly matters. Their whole sympathies are absorbed by self-interest, the daily pleasures of life, the round of amusements which prevent tedium and expel dullness, the enjoyment of the display of taste and treasure, the sense of having at command everything that luxury can supply.

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Rev. S. E. Wishard, D.D., cited the following four characteristics of the spirit of worldliness:

I. A declining love is only partially controlling. It does not hold the mastery over the soul and the life. Its admonitions are feeble. Love was once compelling, by a sweet and blessed force, to which it was a joy to yield; but as its decline is manifested it loses its grip on the life, and the victim of this decay halts before duty, and turns hesitatingly from what would have been a supreme delight when a first love was enthroned. The victim of this moral paralysis does not mean to turn entirely away from God, but consents to follow him afar off, as Peter did, walking in the easy way, but dodging the severer tests.

II. It is compromising, willing to "Become all things to all men," but from a different motive power than that which controlled the apostle, and with a different purpose. It is calculating, troubled with interrogation points, questioning how the reputation of self is to be effected if one should stand for God in every emergency. It is timid, sees a lion in the way, is in great fear where there is nothing to fear, has forgotten that "There is nothing hard for the Lord." It has come to the place where the natural man dominates the spiritual man. "When he would do good, evil is present" with him, to enslave, to fetter all the aspirations of his better self.

III. It divides the life and tempers it down to a respectable morality. Its victim is "of all men the most miserable." His conscience has once been enlightened. He has once tasted the liberty wherewith God makes free, has known the joy of full conversion, has walked in the way that was made plain for him. But having lost his first love "the fine gold has become dim," the rough places are no longer smooth, the yoke is no longer easy, nor the burden light. He has ceased to "run in the way of God's commandments," but limps and mopes.

IV. It dreads the discovery and enforcement of obligation, is restless under the pressure of truth, finds it convenient to forsake the place where the gospel is offered to the people. He has forgotten the admonition, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together," or at least has forgotten the hold it once had on him. Even memory grows dim as love decays.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Look Up, Not Down (711).

Guides in the Alps tell us that, as they are journeying up over the ice along some narrow pathway that girdles a mountain precipice, they sometimes hear the sounds of objects falling into the abyss below, or see their shadows moving downward over the snows on the opposite sides of the valley. Then they say that they dare not look at the falling object nor at its shadow. There is danger, if they do so, that their bodies may follow the direction of their eyes,—that they may lean over too far, may lose their balance, and be dashed to pieces in the depths below. Their only safety comes from keeping their gaze fixed steadily on the pathway before them which leads them upward and onward. Our only safety in the journey of life is in learning not to direct our attention to the things—not to mind—the things that lead us to look downward, but to keep our eyes

fixed steadily on that which leads us upward and onward.—Prof. George Lansing Raymond.

Do Not Let the Material Eclipse the Spiritual (712).

Dr. Watkinson quotes the Oriental proverb which says, "The lotus-flowers are not the Nile." The lotus-flowers are very beautiful as they fringe the river, as they shine on its bosom, but they are not the river; they are not the source of the bread men eat; they satisfy no thirst; they are charming, but they are not the Nile. So Dr. Watkinson says the natural or the physical must not be allowed to eclipse the spiritual in which it lives and holds together. Suns, moons, and stars are golden lotus-flowers of the river of God; they derive their splendor from him, they are sustained by him, and we must not permit the water-flowers to divert our thought from the God whose glory streams through the creation making it all that it is.

The Worldly Conception of Life (713).

By many the question of what a man is worth is answered in terms of dollars and cents. He who has made a fortune, although his soul has dried up in the process until all its juices are gone and only the thin, fierce lust of accumulation is left is adjudged to be a success, and he who has lost a fortune is said to have failed. To many there is no other conception of the enlargement and enrichment of life than to multiply its outward luxuries. Food, drink and raiment having been obtained sufficient for all normal and wholesome use, the one concern is for more and finer food, drink and raiment. It may now be pate de foie gras instead of salt pork, champagne instead of beer, silk and broadcloth instead of corduroy and calico, a mansion on the avenue, a villa or a palace in Newport in place of the humble home on the back street. But all too often the object of life has not changed. It is just as materialistic as ever. Its tone has not risen, it has rather lowered. There is no spiritual purpose or meaning to it in their eyes. They are so busy making a living that they never stop to think about the life.—Womar.

Wealth and Worldliness (714).

Our nation is gaining in wealth and growing more worldly. "The per capita ratio of the visible resources of the people of this country is about $1,200 apiece; and if any one suggests that the multi-millionaire has grabbed it all up, we point to the reports of the savings banks, which have accumulated over three billion, six hundred and sixty million dollars, and which have nearly eight million, seven hundred thousand depositors; and to the crop reports, which indicate that the wealth which comes out of the ground aggregates nearly seven billion dollars a year; and to the lists of stockholders of the national banks, which show that these great institutions are held by a multitude of modest investors; and to the hundreds of millions of dollars paid out as wages each year by the industries of the land." Prosperity instead of breeding gratitude frequently leads men to forget God. This means disaster. It is better to be poor and believing than rich and worldly.—Selected.

Detachment (715).

When the Second Adventist informed Mr. Emerson that the world was

about to come to an end, Mr. Emerson answered, "I can get along very well without it." That is one of the formulas of the simple life. The heart of the matter is the spirit of detachment, whereby we make free use of all the pleasant things without being dependent upon them.—George Hodges.

Love Not the World (716).

Essayists, editors, preachers, teachers, sociologists, and plain, every-day folk are discussing the question, "What is the matter with the life of today?" John gave the answer nineteen centuries ago, when he admonished his friends to "Love not the world." That is what ails men and women today: we love the world overmuch; its pomp and pride and parade and possessions. We have gone mad over things. Most of us are trying to "go the pace," and so we have lost our peace and our joy and our power. And with it all we are blind to the obvious fact that among the unhappiest persons on earth are those who have obtained most of this world's gifts. The love of the present world is the blight of our times; let us go to school to saintly old John to learn a better way.—Selected.

Forgetting the Goal (717).

To forget the goal is to forfeit its influence in toning up the life and keeping the aim high and true.

The late Senator Dolliver—that man of high ideals and noble influence—some time before his lamented death said: "From this time on, I am going to serve my conscience. I have been lecturing, I have saved my dollars and put them into a farm out there in Iowa. I am going to judgment in the next twenty years, and I am going so I can look my Maker in the face. I do not have to stay in public life. I can take my books, my wife, and my children, and if I am dismissed from the service for following my convictions, I will go out to my farm, and stay until the call comes."

Senator Dolliver stopped in the midst of his public career to remind himself of the goal, and it steadied him and ennobled all the days that followed. In this case "the call" came soon, but it found him ready.

Why He Did Not Go (718).

The Church of the Transfiguration in New York city is attended by nearly all the actors who go to church at all, and is considered by them the actors' church. Yet strange as it may seem, Dr. Houghton, the rector, whom they all so loved, never entered the playhouse. One day the great actor, Mr. Booth, who was calling upon the doctor in his study, said to him: "Doctor, why is it you never come to the theater to see us play? Are you down on us all?"

"No," said the doctor, "it is not that. Mr. Booth, suppose some night you were suddenly stricken down with a great illness. I hope you would send for me. If you did, where would you like your messenger to find me, about my Master's business or in the parquet of some theater?"

"Doctor, I would want to find you in your place of duty," replied the great actor. "I understand."

XCV. BROTHERLY LOVE.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."—1 John 4:11.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. J. Fleming develops the thought of this text thus:

I. The sacrifice of love. It is of this that John speaks when he says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us." True, the visible world teems with illustrations of God's love, but this surpasses them all; true, our houses are filled with proofs of God's love, but this transcends them all. For "herein is love, not that we loved God." No; we had apostatized from him; we had cast off his allegiance; we were in arms against him; yet in this was manifested the love of God, that he gave his Son for us. Love, then, was the great mission of our Redeemer, to restore, reclaim, sanctify, save. And that love is the theme of the song which John heard in heaven, and which he calls a new song, the language of redeemed men. And Christ has given us the grandest example of sacrifice, for "he loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

II. Out of sacrifice flows service. For such service as this we live in days of wonderful opportunities. Opportunities come to all. Like the stones, they lie at our feet; and he shall gather most who stoops the lowest, like him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to "give his life a ransom for many." Our responsibilities will be measured by our capacity to do good. Many indeed and splendid are the opportunities of service in our day. Never was the Church so powerful in numbers, in wealth, in influence, in organization. There is a work for every man and woman, and a place for every little child. What we want is more quiet consecration in all our work, more of the spirit of love in all our religion.

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In speaking on "How to Learn to Love," Prof. Henry Drummond said:

I. What makes a man a good artist—a good sculptor—a good musician? Practice. What makes a man a good athlete? Practice. What makes a man a good man? Practice. Nothing else. There is nothing capricious about religion. We do not get the soul in a different way—under different laws—from that in which we get the body. If a man does not exercise his arm, he gets no biceps muscle; and if a man does not exercise his soul, he has no muscle in his soul—no strength of character, no robustness. Love is not a thing of emotion and gush. It is a robust, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole character and nature in its fullest development. And these things are only to be acquired by daily and hourly practice. Do not quarrel, therefore, with your lot in life. Do not quarrel with the quality you have of life. Do not be angry that you have to go through a network of temptation—that you are haunted with it every day. That is your practice, which God appoints you.

II. "We love because he first loved us." "We love"—not "We love him." That is the way the old version has it, and it is wrong. "We love

because he first loved us." Look at that word "because." There is the cause of which I have spoken. "Because he first loved us." The effect follows that we love him—we love all men. Our heart is slowly changed. Because he loved us, we love. Contemplate the love of Christ, and you will love. Stand before that, and you will be changed into the same image, from tenderness to tenderness. There is no other way. You cannot love to order. You can only look at the lovely object, and fall in love with it. You cannot command yourself to do it. And so look at the great sacrifice of Christ, as he laid down his life all through life, and at his death upon the Cross of Calvary; and you must love him. Love begets love. It is a process of induction. You put a piece of iron in the mere presence of an electrified body, and that piece of iron for a time becomes electrified. It becomes a temporary magnet in the presence of a permanent magnet, and as long as you leave the two side by side, they are both magnets.

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ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

Love Rises Above Caste (719).

Some one has summed up the litany of feudalism in this couplet:

"God bless the squire and all his rich relations,
And teach us poor folk how to fill our stations!"

Christian love is superior to class and caste.

A New Sense of Brotherhood (720).

There is coming over the world a new sense of brotherhood. It is manifesting itself in many ways. It is seen in the rapidly growing sentiment against the peoples of different nations destroying one another in wars. It is seen in Hague conferences and the 158 arbitration treaties signed in this century. It is seen in the fact that thousands of people who do not suffer are working to save others from suffering, as in the fight against child labor, the saloon, tuberculosis, white slavery, economic injustice. It is seen in the new social enthusiasm of the church. It is seen in the Missionary movement. It is seen in the 470 international conferences where men of all nations assemble to fight humanity's common foes.—Rev. Frederick Lynch.

Love's Leniency (721).

I ought not to pronounce judgment on a fellow creature until I know all that enters into his life; until I can measure all the forces of temptation and resistance; until I can give full weight to all the facts in the case. In other words, I am never in a position to judge another.—Hamilton W. Mabie.

The Law of Love (722).

So important is this law of love that God has ordained the family by which he calls us out of individualism into the larger service of the household. Above the family altar is the national altar, and the nation is the divine organism by which God calls us out of the narrower love of the clan into the larger service of the state. Above the family altar and the national altar is the altar of the church, on which God calls us to offer our lives for the salvation of the race. Missions rise above the local church interests because they summon us to the highest and broadest

service. Surely in nature and in human institutions are the finger prints of him "through whom all things were made."

Love is wisdom. The martyr is the philosopher. Only as we forego all personal and temporal aims do we rise into the region of the universal and the eternal. Light, the most beautiful of all gifts, never shows itself, but only the object it falls upon. Love is the greatest law in the universe.—Selected.

Our Love Measures Our Power to do Good (724).

Since the measure of our love to others is the measure of our power to do them good, we must cultivate and increase this love by all means within our reach. Nothing is of such consequence or such comprehensiveness as love; nothing is so strong, so sweet, so full of power and peace; it magnifies the smallest gift and dignifies the most insignificant task; it conquers the most obdurate and binds together the most dissimilar.—Selected.

Burden Bearing (725).

Burden bearing is presented in the Scriptures in three general aspects, each worthy of consideration in itself and in all their relations each to the other. We are exhorted to "bear one another's burdens," in a spirit of sympathy and helpfulness. But some will say, "I am bearing all I can of my own, how can I bear any more for another?" This is a wrong idea of spiritual service. In helping another you gain strength for your own. It is not like shifting weight in pounds and ounces from one heavily burdened to another, and so to crush one by relieving another; in the matter of spiritual service one bears his own easier who helps another to bear his. Here is one bearing a weight of ignorance concerning the word of God. If the conscientious teacher will try to help him with the burden by teaching, he will not only help him into the truth, but he will find the same truth becoming more fully his own by the very effort to explain it to another. All self-sacrificing labor communicates a glow and an uplift to the soul that gives to it power and strength to cast our burdens on the Lord.—Selected.

Love Supreme (726).

Great is faith and great is hope, but greater than these is love. Faith is mighty even to the moving of mountains; it sails the wildest seas; it can open blind eyes, can do many a miracle; it justifies the soul and anticipates heaven. Great is faith; but love is greater. Faith tires betimes; love is unwearied. Faith is not always welcome; love is at home everywhere and travels all the world without a passport. Faith is now and again a day late. Love stayed last at the cross and came first to the sepulchre. Faith and hope long for heaven. Love is heaven; for God is love, and when we love we are in heaven.

Would you get out of a man the best that is in him, the appeal must be to love. One may learn geometry, yet may not know nor have even so much as heard of Euclid. But we cannot rightly accept "these sayings of mine" without taking to our hearts him who said them. We cannot separate Christ's precepts from Christ's person. "Never man spake like this man." As he continues to speak, follow him up and presently you will cry, "My Lord and my God! Thou alone hast the words of eternal

life; to whom else can we go?" "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "If ye love me, keep my commandments,"—do my will; "Be doers of the word and not hearers only." Let your deeds be your eulogists. More eloquent than words, more effective than self-assertion, is the doing of the Master's will, prompted out of a heart full of love for the Master and deeply imbued with his truth.—John R. Paxton, D.D.

Love the Generator (727).

The great electric generator in the power house is started by steam. Then it is swung into the mechanical system of which it is a part, and immediately it begins to run by a new power. The steam becomes then no longer necessary, for the engine has been brought into unison with the electric current which comes from the vast storehouse of the earth, and with that new and throbbing life it proceeds now on its mighty way. Henceforth you cannot stop it without stopping all the vast enginery of which it is a part. However a man may begin in his course of right living, with whatever vision of what is before him, or impulse from what lies within and about him, it is only when he has some one to love that he really becomes aware of the power he possesses. Then he works. Then he sacrifices. Then he is filled with the joy which both satisfies and ennobles.—Stimson.

Love for Friend and Foe (728).

Many years ago two British officers, Captain Conolly and Colonel Stoddart, were thrown into prison by the Afghans in Bokhara, and after six months in a miserable dungeon, they were beheaded.

For a long time their fate was unknown in England, until a missionary undertook a dangerous journey to Bokhara, and ascertained that they had been murdered two years before. Five years later, a Russian officer, passing through the bazaar in the city, picked up a little well-worn English prayer-book which Captain Conolly had used in prison, and in which he had written an account of his sufferings. The Russian officer purchased the book and carried it home to St. Petersburg.

The little prayer book that lay for seven years on the shelves of a Bokhara bazaar, next spent fourteen years in St. Petersburg, where an English visitor, who chanced to see it, begged permission to take it to Captain Conolly's relatives in England. Thus, twenty-one years after her brother's death, Miss Conolly received the book that told of his sufferings. About that time a mission hospital was opened at Bannu, near Bokhara, and Miss Conolly undertook the support of a bed in memory of her brother. Over it hangs a tablet which reads: "Conolly Bed. In memory of Captain Conolly, beheaded at Bokhara."

No wonder that when the doctor in charge tells the sick Afghans of the way the Christian lady took her revenge, they are impressed that here is something very new and strange—an object-lesson of the love of Christ.—World-wide Missions.

XCVI. THE ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYERS.

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that are desired of him."—1 John 5:14, 15.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

In a sermon on this text, Rev. Dr. J. Moorhouse said:

The power by which we overcome the world is the Divine life which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ; but in order to our obtaining that life two conditions must be fulfilled: first, God must give it; and secondly, we must take it.

I. God must give it, for although there may be many things that we could earn or produce for ourselves, obviously there is one thing which we could neither earn nor create, into which, it is plain, we must be born—that is, our life. Now this is true of all life, whether the life that we possess by nature, or the life that we possess by grace. Nevertheless, respecting the Divine life that is in Christ Jesus, a further affirmation must needs be made. It must not only be given us by God, but it must be taken through our faith. And this arises from the very nature of spiritual things, for when God is said to have made us free and responsible creatures he is said in effect to have ordained that our obedience should be of a certain quality, that it should not be that of the world, unconscious and constrained, not that of the beasts, unconscious and instinctive, but that of the holy angels, the voluntary obedience of a free and virtuous choice.

II. What is meant by asking according to God's will? We must make both the matter and the spirit of our prayers correspond to his will. We must ask first in the right spirit, and then for the right thing. 1. We must ask in the right spirit. We must, as the Apostle says, lift up holy hands. In the hands of supplication which we raise to heaven there must be found no sinful and inordinate desires. 2. We must ask the right thing. You will find what is according to God's will, what you not only may expect, but must expect, to receive, in the pages of God's holy word. Lord Clive, we are told, once when he was in India was taken into a vaulted chamber which was filled from end to end with all kinds of treasure; there were heaps of gold, heaps of silver, heaps of precious trinkets, heaps of jewels; and he was told by the native ruler of Bengal to take as much as he pleased. And recalling that incident of his life, it is said that he exclaimed, "I am amazed at my own moderation!" Now the Bible is God's treasure-house, filled from end to end with precious jewels; and we are bidden to take as many of the rarest and richest as we please, without money and without price.

* * *

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman is sponsor for this case of answered prayer. He says:

A friend of mine in Cincinnati had preached his sermon and sank

back in his chair, when he felt impelled to make another appeal. A boy at the back of the church lifted his hand. My friend left the pulpit and went down to him, and said, "Tell me about yourself." The boy said, "I live in New York. I am a prodigal. I have disgraced my father's name and broken my mother's heart. I ran away and told them I would never come back until I became a Christian or they brought me home dead." That night there went from Cincinnati a letter telling his father and mother that their boy had turned to God.

Seven days later, in a black bordered envelope, a reply came which read: "My dear boy, when I got the news that you had received Jesus Christ the sky was overcast; your father was dead." Then the letter went on to tell how the father had prayed for his prodigal boy with his last breath, and concluded, "You are a Christian tonight because your old father would not let you go."

* * *

J. A. Williams treated this text in this manner:

I. Prayer is the expression of confidence in God. In general, the language of want, desire, and necessity. Specially, the language of the soul enlightened by the Spirit of God to discover its necessities, and to desire what the Divine bounty has provided for it. It is intelligent—discriminating—definite—embracing the exercise of faith in the Divine purpose, and in the Divine integrity. II. Our petitions, embodying the soul's confidence, are regulated by God's promise and warrant. His will as revealed. Precepts concerning our progress in holiness, to which all else is subordinate. Promise, aid to ourselves—deliverance—support—comfort—spirit to the Church—conversion of sinners—progress of truth. Promise, revelation of Divine intention, in relation to the moral progress of the soul. Points out the position and helps to attain it—ground of faith and measure of trust—God hath said, and faith may confide.

III. Faith brings within the range of our experience the blessings we thus desire. Faith, not an opinion, nor a bare persuasion, but an intelligent, active principle: 1. Apprehending the good promised and sought. 2. By its moral influence it prepares and qualifies for the enjoyment of the promised good. 3. The love, thus relying on the promises, becomes conscious of the blessings bestowed. An apprehension of good promised—definite faith—strong desire and purpose—seeking God's glory—will bring us to realize God's promises.

"When the Lord changes our petitions in his answers, it is always for the better; he regards (according to that well-known word of St. Augustine), our well more than our will."—Leighton.

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ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

What Happens When You Pray (729).

Now, what happens when you pray? You express a petition, a desire of your heart. That in itself is an expression of your will, not necessarily in words, but in thought. In the sight of God you have declared your will in a certain direction. If that is along the line of God's benevolent intention for you, then it has become possible for God's energy to operate. Before your prayer it could not operate because you resisted, or because

you failed to communicate. The contact brings the current. Suppose an arm of iron, charged with a powerful electric current, swings out over the water, and a wire is brought up into contact from the other side of the river. A hundred wires are attached, and they will draw the current. But each wire must be brought into position and the contact must not be broken, or there is no benefit from the main current. I suppose that to a man whose mind is hardened by materialism and commercialism, prayer is just as strange and incredible as a conversation by telephone would be to a savage from Central Africa. But let the savage live a few months in the city and become civilized, and even before he is well educated he will be using the telephone for all practical purposes. Let him go to an industrial school to study or work for a few years, and he will be able to explain the telephone system to you, and he may even construct a switchboard for your service. It has all become reasonable and credible to him. It has become second nature. But while he was in the jungles of Africa the telephone would have seemed sheer nonsense to him.

The beautiful and melodious organ of the New York Avenue Methodist Church was constructed by an Armenian young man who, a few years ago, was living in the primitive conditions of a Turkish village, conditions as far removed from modern science as was the nomad life of Abraham. Yet a course of education at the Mission College and then at Edinburgh, Scotland, in an organ factory, have made of him a master mechanic and a musician of no mean ability.

So I believe it is in the life of prayer.—Rev. S. van R. Trowbridge.

Prayer is Communion (730).

Prayer is "the practice of the presence of God." Prayer becomes the means of mutual communication between me and God. I communicate to him an aspiration; he communicates to me an inspiration. And so we find the Master saying, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." In the life of the spirit we begin to expire the moment we cease to aspire. Spiritual aspiration makes spiritual expiration impossible. "Men ought always to pray" and they would never faint. Prayer is a means to the restful realization of the Eternal, and so is a means to the culture of faith. —J. H. Jowett, D.D.

World Movers Men of Prayer (731).

Some years ago a great London newspaper announced in heavy, leaded lines these words, "Gordon asks for the Prayers of the People of England." Here was a great Christian soldier advertising for prayer. Chinese Gordon, as everybody called him, was then speeding on camelback across the desert of Upper Egypt, going by direction of Mr. Gladstone to rescue the people of the Soudan from the fury of the False Prophet. He was the man who had saved China from a war which threatened the destruction of the Empire. When his life was in danger in Khartoum, in 1884, prayer was offered for him in the churches of England and America, in the Roman Church and Greek Church, in the temples of China and even before the shrine of Mecca. His death plunged London into such a gloom that the day has been known ever since as "Black Thursday."

The world movers have been men of prayer. It has been the men of prayer who have made and crushed empires; who have crossed unknown seas, who have traversed trackless deserts, who have discovered unknown worlds, who have almost measured infinity. Washington was a man of prayer. Gladstone was very religious. Men of prayer have been men of faith, and prayer is the voice of faith.—Selected.

How God Answers Prayer (732).

A large, splendidly-equipped steamship sailed out from Liverpool for New York. Among the passengers were a little boy and girl, who were playing about the deck, when the boy lost his ball overboard. He immediately ran to the captain, and shouted, "Stop the ship, my ball is overboard!" The captain smiled pleasantly, but said, "Oh, no, my boy! I can not stop the ship with all these people, just to get a rubber ball." The boy went away grumbling, and confided to the little girl that the captain didn't stop the ship because he couldn't. He believed the ship was wound up some way in Liverpool, and she just had to run, day and night, until she ran down. A day or so afterward, the children were playing on deck again, when the little girl dropped her doll down into the engine-room, and she supposed it, too, had gone overboard. She said, "I will run and ask the captain to stop the ship and get my dolly." "It's no use," said the boy; "he can't do anything, I've tried him." But the little girl ran out to the captain with her story and appeal. The captain came and peeked down into the engine-room, and seeing the doll, said, Just wait here a minute." And, while the ship went right on, he ran down the stairway and brought up the little girl's doll, to her delight and to the boy's amazement.

The next day the cry rang out, "Man overboard!" and immediately the bell rang in the engine room, by orders from the lever in the hands of the captain; the great ship stood still until boats were lowered and the life was rescued. Then she steamed on until she reached her wharf in New York. As soon as the ship was tied up, the captain went up town and bought the boy a better ball than the one he had lost. Now, each of the three prayers was answered. The little girl received her request without stopping the ship; the little boy, by a little waiting, received his also; and yet, for sufficient reason the ship was stopped by a part of the machinery itself, not as an afterthought, but something put into the ship when it was made.—Henry Drummond.

Power Through Prayer (733).

I shall never forget a scene in the Tremont Temple, Boston. Every seat was taken; the platform back of me was packed with leading ministers of Boston and New England. In front of me were leading men and women in the social, business and political life. I took up the program to announce the next speaker, as I was chairman of the convention, and I saw the name of a woman. In those days I was prejudiced against women speaking in public. Furthermore this woman I knew had had almost no experience in public address; she had only been a real Christian a very short time, though she had been a nominal, worldly Christian for years. But I had to announce the program, so I announced the name

of this woman as the next speaker, sat down, buried my face in my hands, and commenced to pray that God would save the meeting from disaster.

Pretty soon I began to watch as well as pray. That whole audience sat spellbound, every eye riveted on that little woman. Then I saw strong men taking out their handkerchiefs and trying to pretend they were not crying. Then they threw off all pretense, and the tears rained down their cheeks; and before that woman had finished, that whole audience was swept by the power of her words as the trees of our Western forests are swept by a cyclone.

When that marvelous address was over some of us went to this lady and said, "God has wonderfully used you this morning." She said, "Would you like to know the secret of it? Last night as I thought of the great audience I should face in the morning and of my utter inexperience in public address, I spent the whole night on my face before God in prayer." Brethren, when you and I shall spend more nights on our faces before God in prayer there will be more days of power when we face our audiences.

Do you want power? Ask for it. The great need of today is prayer, prayer, prayer! What we need in the church is prayer. What we need in our individual lives is prayer. What we need in our work for Christ is prayer. "Ye have not because ye ask not." Let us see to it each one of us that we may be able to say, "I have, because I ask."—Selected.

XCVII. STANDING IN THE SUNSHINE.

"Keep yourselves in the love of God."—Jude 21.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. George F. Pentecost used the following striking setting forth of the heart of this truth:

When I was a little boy of eight or nine years, I was sitting with my old grandmother before an enormous old-fashioned open fireplace on which a great fire of logs was burning. She suspended her knitting for a moment (she was always knitting), and stooped down to arrange the two ends of a stick of wood which had burned through and fallen out on the hearthstone. In doing so, her spectacles fell off her nose on the stone hearth, and one of the eyeglasses was unfortunately broken. But "granny" quietly pulled the extra pair, which she always carried on the top of her head, down to her face, and picked up the broken pair. Having seen the extent of the damage, she took the whole eyeglass from the frame, and, turning to me, said:

"Here is something which will amuse you," and handed me the unbroken eyeglass.

It was double convex lens; but then a convex lens was a scientific instrument of unknown value to me, so I said:

"I don't see how I am to amuse myself with that, grandma."

It was a brilliant day in winter time; the sun was shining from a cloudless sky, and being near noon time, it was at the height of its power.

My grandmother led me out on the veranda on the south side of the house, and taking a piece of paper with her, she placed the bit of glass above it, facing the sun. In an instant there appeared a brilliant circle of white light upon the surface of the paper. Drawing the glass up and down, the brilliant spot increased and decreased in size until the bright spot of light shrank to a point of white light; and then in a moment, to my astonishment, the paper began to smoke, and then to burn. I was filled with wonder and amazement. The power of the double convex lens to concentrate rays of sun upon a focal point and generate such a heat as to produce combustion was unknown to me. Grandmother repeated her experiments upon the side of the house and upon the sleeve of my jacket until I was wild to try it myself. Taking the glass, I bolted down the village street in search of boys to whom I intended to exhibit my wonderful "burning glass." I quickly found an interested company of spectators, to whom I explained the wonders of the glass and made demonstration of its powers upon their jacket sleeves and upon the back of their hands, whenever I could induce some skeptic to allow me to prove to him that the smoke and fire were no tricks, but real substances produced by the glass.

This little incident of my childhood comes back to me now. How was it that the sun shining through that glass would burn even unto fire, when the same sun, shining out over all the world, only produced a mild and gentle warmth? The answer is easy. Its power was concentrated by

means of the glass. Now, suppose one should say: "I believe in the heat of the sun, but I do not believe in your burning glasses. I am content with the sun at its natural strength." If it were a case of life and death that fire should be produced, a belief in and a use of the burning glass would be necessary. The sun would shine and give out a certain genial warmth, but it would kindle no fire unless its rays were gathered and focalized upon the point where the fire was desired. It is even so with the love of God. It is shining out upon the whole world; and all men, saints and sinners, are gaining a certain measure of benefit from it; but the universal love of God for the world and all created things will not save a single soul. God has set a great burning glass in the earth, through which all the rays of his mighty love are refracted upon those who draw near to it. Jesus Christ is that burning glass. He is the one Mediator between God and man, through whom the saving grace and love of God works with power. Yonder he is lifted up to the sight of the world on the Cross of Sacrifice, and whosoever believeth in him is saved. As the sinner draws near to God by Christ Jesus, and looks at the invisible God as revealed in his Son Jesus Christ, and approaches him through that medium, lo! his soul is at once set on fire by the divine love which is shed on us abundantly by the Holy Ghost.

It is here, and only here, that we can find the love of God operating in saving power. Let the children of God "keep themselves in the love of God," as that love is manifested and poured out upon us through Jesus Christ.

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Rev. S. van R. Trowbridge used the following peroration in a sermon on this theme:

Let me emphasize the permanence of love as the motive which shall shape and glorify our whole experience in the life of the future. There will come a day when the eloquence and science and accumulations of our earthly life must be left at one side. They are no more than the temporary scaffolding which is withdrawn when the cathedral is complete, ready to stand forth a marvel of grace and splendor. They are but the school books which contribute to the boy's education. But once the mind is trained and the manly character formed the old wornout school books are no more than rubbish. The well-developed mind is ready for new literature. As our childhood is to our mature manhood, so our earthly experiences stand related to our heavenly life. There in that larger, richer life the love of God shall find free expression, and we shall no longer see Christ "in a mirror darkly," but we shall see him face to face!

What, then, does God demand of you today? How can you make the Christ love the master motive? If you are impulsive, ask God to give you the calm, restraining influence of a deeper love for Christ. Are you slow and unresponsive? Ask God for the fire which burned in the enthusiasm of Jesus. Are you fault-finding and unforgiving? Study the effect of Christ's crucifixion upon the lives of those early disciples. Are you anxious about the future? Remember that love is immortal and those who love deeply and sincerely are the very children of God. Are you cold toward Christ? Ask God to forgive your ingratitude and help you know your Saviour so as to love him fervently.

God has given you a will, a free will, that no one else can tamper with, a will that is for you to use and not to play with! God has given you a will, just as the builders of the Imperator have given the great ship a steering apparatus absolutely essential to the voyage. God wants you to make love the love of the heart of Jesus, the master motive of your life!

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

How to Keep in This Love (734).

Every time I am allured by the devil to sink my manhood in sensual distractions and I hold my manhood by the grace of God in stern, firm, pure self-control, I have got the palm. And there are men and women here who have been carrying that palm all through the week, the palm of a glorious moral firmness, the sovereign control that is ours by the grace of God. White robes, palms in their hands, they sing! A pure, strong life is musical. That is to say, it is harmonious. That is to say, that all varied powers of the soul are concordant in obeying, giving homage, worship and glory to God. In the 103d Psalm, the Psalmist sings: "O my soul, and all that is within me (it sounds like an orchestra), bless his holy name." To the younger people I would say, Sit down and write out the names of your orchestra. Look into your mind and examine the body, and every faculty, mental and spiritual, is a member of your orchestra, and write a list, and when you pray tonight pray that all that is within you may praise and bless his holy name. It is the worship of harmony. They are clothed in white robes and all carry a palm, and they are all singing. God's statutes have become their Psalms —Jowett.

The Safe Place (735).

In his History of the Plague of London, Daniel Defoe tells how he was one day walking down Holborn and observed that the stream of passers-by kept, with conscientious precision, in the middle of the street. They feared lest they should run against plague-smitten people coming out of their houses on either the right hand or the left. Let us have an equal dread of the corruptions which menace our spiritual life, and show ourselves the possessors of that true religion, one of the marks of which is that it keeps itself unspotted from the world. Be found in the very center of the way. Place yourself as far from evil as you can. Remember the risks which lurk around you, and walk with such care that your garments will be always white.—Rev. F. G. Selby.

Just to be With Him (738).

A father said: I was awakened the other night by the pressure of a firm little hand across my forehead and the touch of soft little lips upon my cheek; and as I reached out in the dark, and gathered the little fellow to me, I said, "What is the matter, little man? What is it you want?" "Oh!" he said, "nothing's the matter, father, and I don't want anything but I just thought I would come and be for a little while with you." Do you suppose that we are nobler characters than that great Father after whom these human fatherhoods of ours are named? Do you suppose that if it is sweet to have our little children come creeping

to us in the dark, it is not sweet to our Heavenly Father here, everywhere, to have men, his sons, come stealing to his side and his love?—Sunday School Times.

Realizing God's Love (739).

For every degree of fear, from the blackness of the most paralyzing terror to the least gesture or tone that is insincere because of some lurking apprehensiveness, there is a corresponding deliverance into the freedom and brightness of love. This deliverance is accomplished by the realization of God's love to us.

Love, God's love, is the mighty exorciser of the brute elements of fear, hopelessness and despair. Who shall dominate his own inborn fear but he who is filled with the supreme love of Jesus? Fear will vanish only under the burning rays of a love too ardent for our belief.

There are but two classes of people in the world: those who tend toward the state in which there is no fear, but only perfect love, and those who tend in the diametrically opposite direction, toward a state where there is no love, but only absolute and unchanging fear.—Gates.

How Love Develops Character (740).

A woman spent the summer in the mountains and brought home with her in the autumn some pieces of lovely moss. She put it in her conservatory, and in the warmth of the place a multitude of beautiful little flowers came up among the moss. There are in us possibilities which, in common experiences, are not brought out, but when the warmth and light of the love of God pour about them they are wooed forth.—J. R. Miller, D.D.

Love Perfects Service (741).

Think of some young man a hundred years ago impressed into the service of the navy. Caught by the press-gang and torn away from home, how intolerable that service must have seemed! For a time, it would be the bitterest drudgery, performed with many a muttering and curse. There was no escape—it had to be performed—the lash and the irons followed disobedience; that, in the harshest and extremest sense, was the service of necessity. But can we not imagine that young man rousing himself into a worthier mood? At the call of danger he would forget his bondage, and think of the peril of his native land. And patriotic feelings would arise, and his duty to his country would awake; and now his service would be a nobler thing, because it was the service of his duty Then suppose that a young man like that had sailed in the same vessel with Lord Nelson, and had learned to love Nelson with that devoted love which filled the breast of every man who sailed with him. How different would his service now become! How gladly would he toil and fight and die! The thought of duty would be absorbed in love, and love would make his service perfect.—G. H. Morrison, D.D.

XCVIII. THE NEIGHBOR SPIRIT.

"But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"—Luke 10:29.

ILLUMINATIVE COMMENT.

Rev. Dr. William G. McCready, in a sermon to Odd Fellows and Daughters of Rebecca, said: There was an interview between our Lord and a lawyer. The lawyer asks, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The Saviour refers him to the Mosaic law. The lawyer recites the law. Our Lord then says, "This do and thou shalt live." The lawyer is dissatisfied, and asks, "And who is my neighbor?" The answer is far-reaching in its teaching. It puts a new meaning on religion.

The lawyer asked an academic question, and expected an academic answer. He represents a large class of people, who prefer religion to be a philosophy rather than a life. The lawyer's religion was largely a matter of ritual. The religion of Jesus Christ is a life, born of God and developed under God. The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates in a beautiful way the question, "And who is my neighbor?"

The word "neighbor" is a very old word. It is used in the Old Testament when God speaks to Moses as to how the Jews shall treat their neighbors i. e., kinspeople. The classic Greek writers use it frequently largely in a technical sense as describing people who lived near by. Our Saviour puts a new meaning on it. His gospel had for its main purpose the breaking down of national lines and prejudices. It was a revolutionary sentiment; its reach was startling and overwhelming. It broke all shackles of prejudice; it destroyed all the ancient traditions, religious and social, of a proud people. It taught that all men were of one blood; that God was the Father of all. It was the inception of a democracy which meant the restoration of man to a sonship in God; the abolishment of all slavery, social, moral and religious.

The horizon showed the dawning of a new day. The splendid dignity of man was projected after many centuries, to the front, and man looked up to God to be taught.

Christian people need now practical instruction. Our doctrinal predilections often befog our understanding. The doctrine of the Good Samaritan puts Christianity upon a plane where all people must commend it. It shows Christianity to be a life and conduct. It brings out clearly the elimination of all national or religious prejudice. It awakens in men's hearts a supreme passion, not to promulgate cold tenets, but to present concrete ideals of life.

The man who fell among thieves illustrates the isolation and helplessness of humanity. God takes men and equips them to deal with all the needs and sorrows of their fellow men. Howard, studying the awful conditions of the prisoners of the English and European prisons, gave his life to secure more comfort and hope for them. Christian men must come to a consciousness of the real significance of the faith that is in them Our selfishness interferes largely with our religious development. With

us, it is self first and God and humanity last. The man who has a supreme passion for God will have automatically a passion for mankind, its needs and difficulties. Never has man's highest self had such scope and opportunity as he has today. The heroes of the past might storm the citadels of the enemy. Explorers might waste body and spirit in behalf of science. The Knights Templars might dedicate themselves to delivering Jerusalem from the infidels. All these might be inspiring and win the applause, but none of them approach the spirit of a Straus, who made it possible, by establishing milk depots for poor mothers, to secure pure milk for their sick babies. The reformation of Europe was but the outburst of a splendid passion to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its pristine purity to mankind. We Americans are endowed by nature with inexhaustible resources—mental moral, social, political and industrial. We are the marvel of all nations. Like Benjamin of old, while we are the youngest, yet we are endowed with a double portion. One conspicuous resource we possess is our power of invention and initiative. Our history inspires the world. Our intrepid spirit surprises other nations. Our philanthropy charms the other peoples.

This spirit of invention and initiative moved certain men in the City of Baltimore, about one hundred years ago, to inaugurate what is known now as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. This fraternal order was benevolent, and its benevolence was democratic in the fullest and best sense: while it was a secret order and imposed obligations of secrecy on its members, its chief purpose was to inculcate principles of friendship, love and truth. It was to present to the ordinary, everyday man the very best practical type of fraternity. Men were to be united by the strongest bonds of Christian fellowship, bound by the warmest ties of sympathy and inspired by the loftiest ideals of manhood. The history of Odd Fellowship has demonstrated to the world the sublime principles of Christian democracy and fraternity.

Odd Fellows do not act under impulse nor are they influenced by ignorant prejudice. In no human organization is there such a flexible democracy; in no human organization do so many varieties of manhood meet: different in intellect, in social standing, in financial ability, all meet on the common level of brotherhood. A common sympathy and solicitude is shown to the sick brother, when the lodge hears of his infirmity, not by a word offered simply, but by money, sick benefits, doctor's care, a nurse's attendance; in case of death, a fixed sum for funeral expenses. The widow and orphans become at once the charge and care and solicitude of the local lodge.

Where shall we find loftier ideals of fraternity and fellowship? The sick brother whose source of income has ceased is comforted by the fact that his lodge will send him a certain income weekly, not as a charity, but as a purchased right and privilege. There are other benevolent orders, but Odd Fellowship was the pioneer which blazed the way in the wilderness of selfishness and set the God-given standard.

* * *

Preaching on the spirit of helpfulness Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis said: Here is a little book called "The Penny Philanthropist." It is a page torn from life. Over on Halsted Street, Chicago, midst the saloons and gam-

bling dens and dives, lives a girl, still in young womanhood. She was left an orphan in her teens with the task of caring for her younger sister and brother. She rented a tiny little room between an Italian restaurant and a Jew's second hand clothing store. She sold papers in the morning and at night, and between times she made clothes for her sister and brother and kept house for them. Finally through Christ's saying about giving a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, she determined to give one cent a day, and to find the person with whom the cent would go farthest possible by way of investing herself. This search for the neediest person soon became fascinating. One of her later experiences was of a boy in the gray dawn of a winter morning. Peggy's quick eye told her that he was a country boy, out of work, discouraged, and that each day his clothes would be thinner and his face more gaunt. Knowing that the boy was probably too proud to accept the gift of a paper, Peggy asked him to tend her papers for a few minutes while she attended to some task indoors, and stepping inside she poured a cup of hot coffee and a roll. Soon she came back, most effusive in her thanks, and asked him to step inside because she could watch her stand just as easily through the window, and the story of that boy, and what Peggy did for him, makes up a fascinating page in the epic and drama of a story of a man's life.

Once a girl of the neighborhood came along, and in saying good night to Peggy showed singular agitation. The Penny Philanthropist saw that some crisis was on, and her quick eye noticed that the girl had slipped a note under the pile of daily papers. Suspecting a tragedy, Peggy invented a story of trouble within, induced the girl to bring her something from the shop, found the letter and one glance revealed the fact that she was preparing to throw herself in the river, and wanted Peggy, when she found the letter, to notify her family. Then came all the ingenuities of love, that kept the girl moment by moment, and hour by hour, and finally drew out the full confession until our Penny Philanthropist saved both the body and soul from death. A rich man, driving to his factory, stopped every morning and evening to get a bundle of papers and magazines. He had learned how Peggy, with a penny a day, had served her fellows. One morning he told her that he would like to give her a dollar every day to invest for him, but Peggy answered, "But what good would that do you? It isn't so much the penny, as it is the person. It is you behind the penny. I won't take your old dollar." The manufacturer carried away a wholesome surprise, but afterward through his daughter and her girl's club work, planned by the Penny Philanthropist, he learned how to give himself. In many cities and states, I have asked, What heroic deed has been done in your community? What tragedy has overwhelmed your people? What romantic story of success has there been lived out? What poor boy has risen; what strong man has fallen? I have heard enough romances and tragedies for the essence of a hundred novels. Oh, the heroism of daily life! The Othellos are all about us with their jealousy! Here too the Hamlets, slain by indecision! Macbeths are destroyed by over-weening ambition. Jeanie Deans is here still faithful to truth and God. Knights as stainless as Sir

Galahad are today on their quest. Sir Perceval still seeks and finds the Holy Grail. Never was the Vision Splendid so clear, never duty so high or service so fine! Ten thousand sparkling deeds are being daily done for those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand.

XCIX. FRIENDSHIP—FRATERNALISM.

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."—Proverbs 17:17.

ILLUSTRATIVE THOUGHTS AND INCIDENTS.

For Sermons to Fraternal Orders.

Comfort (742).

It is good to get at the root-meaning of our English word, comfort. The word has come to be suggestive of a cosy seat beside the fire on some winter's night. But the word itself finds its true meaning illustrated rather outside in the darkness and storm, where is some poor woman with a heavy basket on her arm, and a long, dreary way before her. Now comes one who speaks with such kindliness that she cannot but trust him. "You seem very tired," he saith, "may I help you?" And as he carries her burden her heart grows light and the way is easy. That is comfort. Co—that is, together with, or company; and fort—that is, strength. To strengthen by company. That is it precisely. The moment we set out to live a better life, the gracious Master is ever going that way, and with gentle love he cometh to carry our burdens for us and to lead us on our way.—Mark Guy Pearse.

Friendship (743).

That which men need from us is the result of our own experience, that which means something to us which we can say with conviction, and speak out with joy. The larger, therefore, our own claim in life, the larger must be the self that we have to give in friendship. My friend needs quite as much as I, that I should have true self-reverence. Moreover, it is impossible that that deep revelation of one's self, which is essential to intimate friendship, should ever be made where the spirit of the other is essentially profane and blasphemous. He, who can consent to tattle as an idle tale that sacred bit of your life which you have opened up to him in the hope of giving help at a time of mortal peril, can never be your friend. From such you must shut yourself. You have cast your pearls before swine and they have trampled them under their feet and turned again to rend you.—"The Laws of Friendship, Human and Divine," by President Henry Churchill King.

Rich in Friendships (744).

"I had a friend!" Is there anything more beautiful in all this world than the consciousness of possessing sweet, loyal, helpful friends, whose devotion is not affected in the least by a fortune or the lack of it; friends who love us even more in adversity than in prosperity?

At the breaking out of the Civil War, when the qualifications of the different candidates for the Presidency were being discussed, and Lincoln was mentioned, someone said: "Lincoln has nothing, only plenty of friends." It is true that Lincoln was poor, that when he was elected to the legislature of his State he borrowed money to buy him a suit of

clothes, in order that he might make a respectable appearance, and that he walked a hundred miles to take his seat. It is a matter of history that he also borrowed money to move his family to Washington after he was elected President, but how rich he was in friendships!—Orison Swett Marden.

Be Sympathetic (745).

The only way in which the manifold claims of justice can be met is by the continual presence of an intelligent sympathy. Unless we can enter into the pleasures and pains of other people with some degree of participation, we cannot tell how to promote the one or avert the other. Only a keen sense of our friend's feelings will prevent us from wounding them; only a vivid realization of the needs of a community will teach us how to minister to those needs; only a close sympathy with the miseries which a special course of action will produce can lead us to take special pains to avoid that cause. If we are indifferent to all suffering but our own, we shall not exert ourselves to diminish it; if we care nothing for any joys but our own, we shall not strive to increase or perpetuate them. —Great Thoughts.

The Heart of a Friend (746).

"Broken friendship," says a recent writer, "like china, may be repaired, but the break will always show." And it is a bit of real truth and wisdom. Friendship is a precious thing—too precious a treasure to be carelessly broken or thrown away. The world handles the word "friend" lightly; its real, true, deeper meaning is forgotten, and the acquaintance of an hour or the chance comer is designated by the term which in itself bears a wealth of meaning. Your friend is the one who appreciates you—your faults as well as your virtues—who understands and sympathizes with your defeats and victories, your aims and ideals, your joys and temptations, your hopes and disappointments, as no one else does or can. It is your friend to whom you turn for counsel, for comfort, for praise; he may not be as learned as some or as wise as others, but it suffices that he understands you, and even his quiet listening gives strength and renewed courage. Blessed is the man or woman into whose life has come the beauty and power of such a friendship. Prize it well. Do all in your power to keep such a friendship unbroken. Avoid the break, for when it comes it can not be easily mended, and the jarring note mars the harmony of the whole glorious symphony. It is not alone a question of forgiveness; that may be full and complete. It is the hurt in the heart that will not readily heal and the confidence that will not fully come back!—The Pilgrim.

I Had a Friend (747).

A young man who had long been the victim of evil habits and had lost, as he supposed, every friend he had in the world, appealed to a business man of excellent standing for aid. It was granted with such a spirit of confidence and kindness that a new feeling came into the heart of the young man. It was the beginning of a friendship which grew stronger and stronger. The young man fell again and again, but his friend never wavered. He saw an opportunity to do good. He held the struggling

soul up, and when he fell lifted him up again. He turned his thought toward God and rescued him from the power of evil by the ministry of an unwavering and unselfish friendship.—Selected.

Friendship (748).

Human life offers us nothing else so beautiful as real friendship; not love, not prosperity, not fame, are so fair, so precious. So foster it! Let no distrust, no absence, no difference of environment dim its luster. Let death itself be powerless to rob you of its sweetness! Never break it, never lose it; it is the sweetest touch of mortal life.—The Canadian Presbyterian.

The Cultivation of Friendship (749).

Recently a prominent business man, advanced in years, who had fallen in with a group of acquaintances on a holiday outing interrupted the conversation to say, "Well, I must hurry on, I have an engagement at three o'clock." Surprise being expressed that he should permit his holiday to be broken in upon by business appointments, he explained that his engagement was not a business one, but that he had arranged to spend part of the day with a group of young men, some of whose names he mentioned, who were coming figures in the business and professional life of the community. He further said: "I have made it a practice to cultivate the society of these young men. I am getting old; the friends who started with me in the world have been dropping along the way until only a few of them are left. Unless I keep making new friends, therefore, I'll presently find myself alone. I do not want to be in that position. I feel the need of friends. No one can afford to be without them. Hence, as the ranks are being depleted at one end, I try to fill them up at the other. That is why I cultivate the society of these young men."—Selected.

A Helping Hand (750).

While on shipboard, returning from Europe, the late Hon. Luther L. Mills met a white-haired missionary who had spent his life among the natives of the interior of Africa. Shortly before the voyage was ended, Mr. Mills discovered the missionary in a dark little stateroom, sick and penniless. The famous lawyer held out "a friendly, helping hand," and immediately raised a goodly sum from his passengers, presenting it to the aged servant of Christ. Shortly after, a stranger stepped up to Mr. Mills on the ship's deck and handed to him this verse, as expressive of the spirit of the occasion.

If you have a friend worth loving,
  Love him, yes, and let him know
That you love him, ere life's evening
  Tinge his brow with sunset glow.
Why should good words ne'er be said
  Of a friend—till he is dead?

If you hear a song that thrills you,
  Sung by any child of song,
Praise it. Do not let the singer
  Wait deserved praises long.

Why should one who thrills your heart
Lack the joy you may impart?

If you hear a prayer that moves you,
By its humble, pleading tone,
Join it. Do not let the seeker
Bow before his God alone.
Why should not your brother share
The strength of "two or three" in prayer?

If you see the hot tears falling
From a brother's weeping eyes,
Share them. And by kindly sharing
Own your kinship with the skies.
Why should anyone be glad
When a brother's heart is sad?

If a silvery laugh goes rippling
Through the sunshine on his face
Share it. 'Tis the wise man's saying—
"For both grief and joy a place."
There's health and gladness in the mirth
In which an honest laugh has birth.

If your work is made more easy
By a friendly, helping hand,
Say so. Speak out brave and truly,
Ere the darkness veil the land.
Should a brother workman dear
Falter for a word of cheer?

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness,
All enriching as you go—
Leave them. Trust the Harvest Giver,
He will make each seed to grow.
So until its happy end,
Your life shall never lack a friend.

—The Presbyterian

C. TO ODD FELLOWS.

A Sermon by Rev. I. M. Schaeffer.

"And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, forever."—1 Sam. 20:42.

Man is a social being. In the human breast, there resides the instinct of fraternity. This instinct of fellowship with kindred spirits may be turned to evil account quite as readily as to good account. I welcome you as a lodge of Odd Fellows because of the fact that you are turning the instinct of fellowship into channels of Friendship, Love and Truth. You are constraining this instinct to minister in the interests of friendship, fraternity and fidelity. You are harnessing the instinct of fellowship to high ideals; you are hitching its car to the star of noble purposes.

I welcome you for the reason that Odd Fellowship is the hand-maiden of religion. In reference to religion, James has this to say: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Odd Fellowship not merely uses the parable of the Good Samaritan, in its ritualistic work, but it translates this most beautiful story into actual life. The benevolent operations of Odd Fellowship are being conducted on a colossal scale. The Master said to the lawyer: "Go, and do thou likewise." We welcome to this sanctuary those who are imitators of the Good Samaritan. Odd Fellowship is the handmaiden of the Church; hence we bid you Godspeed in your work and most cordially welcome you to these courts.

Odd Fellowship cultivates an eye and an ear for the signal of distress. To the uninitiated, it may appear as if this Order existed for the sole purpose of conviviality. On the contrary, Odd Fellowship has a sensitive ear and a far-seeing eye for the signal of distress. The Master said: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." To a surprising degree has the spirit of the Master become incarnate in the bosom of Odd Fellowship.

The tnought which our text suggests may be expressed in two words.

Friends Forever.

Jonathan and David established an eternal covenant of friendship between themselves and their offspring. They covenanted to be friends forever. Without this element of permanence, friendship would be sadly defective. Of our Master it is written, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end."

1. The first link in the three golden links of the badge of Odd Fellowship is emblematic of Friendship. Webster defines friendship thus: "The entertaining for another sentiments of esteem, respect and affection,

from personal predilection." Friendship is a virtue which can be but imperfectly defined; it is a virtue which must be felt. Some one has said that a true friend shows his friendliness by his sympathy. Sympathy is making another's experience his very own. A true friend reveals the secrets of his heart to his friend. He draws the curtain of his heart to one side and invites his friend into the holy of holies of his life. This unveiling of the heart and life must of course be mutual else it would be impossible. We wonder in amazement at the words of our Master: "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you." A true friend puts the best construction on the conduct of others. An enemy, on the contrary, puts the worst construction on our acts. The expert photographer has noted that every face, even the most homely, has certain noble lineaments and that these may be brought out so as to characterize the picture, by properly posing the person in relation to the camera and the falling light. On the other hand, the instrument can make the brightest faces dull and the fairest repulsive, if the artist is so disposed. It is this happy art which Odd Fellowship seeks to cultivate, namely, to discover traits of soul-beauty in the diverse characters of its membership.

But the true friend does not hesitate to rebuke our faults. A prominent member of your Order pointed out to me new members who were saved to respectability and usefulness by the rebukes of their brother Odd Fellows. An enemy flatters, glosses over our faults. But a friend does not overlook the faults; on the contrary, he takes us to task for them and holds up for our emulation a noble ideal of character.

A friend in need is the one who is a friend indeed. On this ground Odd Fellowship commends itself very strongly to the unbiased mind. Your Order cultivates in its members a profound concern for the unfortunate brother, for the widow in her bereavement and distress and for the orphan in his helplessness and peril. You will find the parable of the Good Samaritan engraven upon the heart and mind of every true member of your Order. This Order maintains fifty orphanages and homes for aged members in the United States alone.

In an address delivered in 1900 in Richmond, Va., the Grand Sire of the Sovereign Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, Allen S. Pinkerton, said: "If I am correctly informed, the present total taxable valuation (real and personal) of your city is $69,215,000. Raze beautiful Richmond to the ground, convert into coin every foot of land within its corporate limits; let every stone and timber of every factory, every business block, every dwelling house contribute to the sum; into the crucible put the jewels and stores of gold and silver; market the securities, bonds and stocks of the people; when you have done all this, when you have converted the city's soil and buildings into scrip, when you have stripped the citizens of all their taxable property, you will then be 15 million dollars short of the amount of money this Order has expended since 1830 in brotherly relief. At the present rate of charitable expenditure we distribute for such purposes the wealth of Richmond every 19 years; a distribution in which there is no expense account; in which every dollar finds its way into the pocket of the beneficiary."

Especially strong and eloquent are ex-President Harrison's words in relation to the brotherhood of man as the highest conception that had ever entered the human mind, as expressed in his speech at the great council of Missouri: "The highest conception that has ever entered the mind of man is that of God, the Father of all men, the universal brotherhood. It was not evolved; it was revealed. The natural man lives to be ministered unto; he lays imposts upon others. He buys slaves that they may fan him to sleep; that they may bring him the jeweled cup; that they may dance before him, and that they may die in the arena for his sport. Into such a world, there came a King, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. The rough winds fanned him to sleep; he drank from the mountain brook; he did not use his power to stay his own hunger; he had compassion on the multitude. He called them whom he had bought with a great price, no more servants, but friends. He entered the bloody arena alone; dying, he broke all chains and brought life and immortality to light."

This spirit of the Master dwells at least to some degree in this order. So long as it cultivates this spirit of friendship in its membership, no one will question its right to live. It is small wonder that such an Order can boast of a million members in America alone.

2. The second link in the badge is emblematic of **Love.** Fraternity is linked to friendship. Friendship and fraternity are links of gold. Henry Drummond described love as the greatest thing in the world; this definition of love helped to make Drummond famous. This definition is correct so far as it goes, but it is defective in that it does not go far enough. Love is not only the greatest thing in the world but it is also the greatest thing in heaven. God is love. Love is the divinest thing in the universe.

"There is a gem which is called a flystone. To the naked eye it has no peculiarity; but place it under a microscope and you will see in the midst of it a tiny insect, perfect in all its proportions, a riddle in the book of nature. How it came there no one knows, and no human skill could remove it. Whoso would touch that fly must first crush that wall of adamant around it. It is hid in the bosom of the gem. There is in man that which can call God Father, which can never cease to be divine. That something is the spirit of God in man; and the spirit of God in the heart of man is love. It is the divinity that dwells in the human heart." "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God." Love's faith in love is the surest anchor amid the waves of a troublesome world.

An eminent singer was kept by his teacher day by day and month after month practicing the scales in spite of the pupil's entreaties for something more advanced. At last the master told him to go forth as the best singer in Europe, having mastered the scales. Not otherwise did our Lord teach his first disciples. For three years he taught them to love, by miracle and parable and prayer and sermon. When seated with them at the last Supper, he said: "A new commandment I give unto you." And behold, it was the old one: "That ye love one another." After the resurrection, he met his disciples at the beach. He put the repentant Peter through the scales: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou

me?" Having perfected them in love, he said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Having learned to love, their education was complete, their training was ended. They could now go everywhere and do all things.

The apostle Paul wrote down the scales in 1 Cor. 13. You will do well to read this chapter every morning and to translate it into your lives every day. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Love comes to its highest expression in self-sacrifice. A train pulled out of Duluth with 250 passengers. Its engineer was James Root. As the train sped on, the sunlight became strangely darkened, the lamps were lighted and the great eye of the engine was set aflame. "There's a storm coming," one said to another. But the clouds were not those of the cool and refreshing rain. They were the death-pall of the forest fires that were laying the whole fair forest land waste. Soon the smoke wrapped the train in such density that the air became stifling. The light of the engine could penetrate only a few feet ahead. The town of Hinckly was reached, and here was found, no longer a village, but a heap of ashes. Frightened fugitives from the consuming flames clambered frantically aboard the train, begging to be taken from the pursuing flames that even now were leaping upon the engine. James Root, with his hand upon the throttle, began a race for life back over the way they had come. But the flames were faster than even the iron horse, the window glass was shattered, and the blistered woodwork took fire. The cab windows were broken. Arms of flame reached in to catch the clothing of the brave engineer. The throttle became hot, and scorched the hand that held it, but the tense muscles did not for a moment relax their hold. "My God," the fireman heard him gasp, "all these lives in my keeping! Help me to take them to safety!" A little way ahead were the rank sedges and slimy waters of a swamp. If he could only take his train to that point, its precious human freight might be saved. Failure at the throttle meant death to the men, women and children back there in the cars. They were frenzied with fear, not knowing that a hero was at his post. Three times, overcome by the intolerable heat, did James Root fall to the floor of the cab, and three times he dragged himself up to grasp the throttle, the brave heart unfaltering, the brain calm and resolute. At last the swamp was reached, and there was a headlong hurrying from the burning train. As the last one reached the spot of safety the flames burst upon the train with a mighty roar. The noble engineer was carried in the arms of those he had saved. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

3. The third link in the badge is emblematical of **Truth**; truth taken in the sense of reality, integrity. . . . I cannot refrain from interpreting the word truth in the sense of **fidelity**. Friendship, fraternity and fidelity are three golden links of love, which cannot help but anchor the soul aright in any storm-tossed sea. The incident in which our text stands furnishes an illustration. King Saul and his sons are slain and

the crown of the kingdom is about to be placed on David's head. Ishbosheth alone disputed his right to the sovereign sway over the entire nation. Jonathan with whom David had formed a covenant of everlasting friendship, had left a young son who in the flight with his nurse when the Israelites were defeated at the hands of the Philistines, fell and became a cripple for life. The child's name was Mephibosheth. And David said: "As for Mephibosheth, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." Accordingly Mephibosheth dwelt at Jerusalem and ate continually at the king's table. Later, David protected Mephibosheth from the revenge of the Gibeonites, "because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan." David carried the spirit of a true Odd Fellow in his bosom. The three golden links of Odd Fellowship may be said to be Friendship, Fraternity and Fidelity.

II. However the three links of Odd Fellowship would be without practical value, without a concrete attachment. Friendship, Love and Truth are not abstract qualities but living entities which can live only when translated into the experiences of practical life. The thought which I have yet in mind may be thus expressed:

Locks for these Links.—My conception of the links of Odd Fellowship is that they are **interlocked.** These links are locked upon each other; they are indissolubly welded together. Friendship, Love and Truth are introactive and retroactive. Kindness, Charity and Character are not separate or separable entities; they are a trinity which is complete in unity. Friendship, Fraternity and Fidelity form a unity which would be incomplete with the loss of any one of these virtues; the links are interlocking.

1. The links ought to be locked to the heart of the true Odd Fellow. Separated from real heart love, the three links are as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. The apostle Paul speaks with authority on this point: "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." The world would call that friendship and love. He says furthermore: "And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." Separated from a loving heart, Friendship, Love and Truth would soon become a hollow mockery. As wearers of the three links, I would exhort you to fasten them to your hearts, so that these virtues may be vital experiences and that the links may throb and thrill with virtuous activities.

With these three links locked to your hearts, lock this triple-linked chain with the link of truth to your noble order. The poet sings:

"Honor to her courts invites us—
Worthy subjects let us prove—
Strong chain that here unites us
Linked with Friendship, Truth and Love;
In our hearts, enshrined and cherished,
May these feelings ever bloom—
Failing not when life has perished,
Living still beyond the tomb."

Being linked and locked to your noble order is a very concrete thing and among other things it ought to mean that the other end of the chain is locked to the heart of every one belonging to your Order. It is not a long chain that unites you and hence not a single brother ought ever be out of sight or out of mind. It would be a crying shame if an Order which aims to write the parable of the Good Samaritan in the hearts of its members should carry on its roll a single member who when confronted by a brother in distress would snap the golden links of brotherhood and heartlessly pass by the brother in distress. The bond of brotherhood ought to preclude the possibility of such heartless barbarism. When the covenant of eternal brotherhood has been solemnized, when the love-lock has been fastened to a brother's heart, the key to the lock should be buried in the sea where it is deepest and the claims of brotherhood be owned and acknowledged forever.

2. Let the chain that is locked to your heart be locked to the benevolent operations of your Order.

"Give happiness. What if thy heart be sad?
Dry thine own eyes to wipe another's tears.
In this good world there are so many biers
Carried by souls in blackest raiment clad,
Souls dazed by desolation and half mad,
Mourning their dead, dead hopes, dead years—
Blind to the star that every midnight cheers,
Deaf to the song which makes morning glad.

"Give spicy blooms where flowers never grow;
Give food where starving hearts fight fate's decree;
Give rest where tired hands and feet drag slow;
Give sight to eyes too full of tears to see;
Give music where sweet trumpets never blow;
Give happiness—and joy shall garment thee."

3. Let the chain of Odd Fellowship be locked to **other Fraternal Orders** which cultivate a similar spirit. The churches of Christendom are cultivating and encouraging the spirit of interdenominational fellowship. The spirit of interdenominational federation is in the very air. It is a hopeful sign of the times. I believe that it augurs well for the successful solution of the grave problems which are challenging both the church and the state. Interdenominational brotherhood is the logical outcome of the spirit of Christ, operative in the churches of Christendom. As I step over the threshold of this fraternal Order, I would raise my voice in behalf of the federation of Fraternal Orders. Practical brotherhood is the keynote of them all. I hope that I may live to see the day when Odd Fellowship will say to Masonry, "We are Brothers," and vice versa; and thus all along the line of the Fraternal Orders. What a wonderful impetus these Orders could give to the moral uplift in a community, if questions which are purely moral should receive the endorsement of these Orders in an unobtrusive but none the less effective way. Many a crying evil could thus be speedily eliminated from the community.

3. Let the chain be locked with the link of Loyalty to the Govern-

ment. Bismarck once gave expression to a sentiment something like this: "I am not afraid to wear any chain only so that the other end of it is linked to the throne of Prussia." Loyalty to the constituted authorities, loyalty to the principles of the Republic, is one of the cardinal principles of our Order and which is constantly being instilled into the hearts and minds of the members whom it initiates. A traitor to our country would not find shelter at its altars. It would not dream of placing as a custodian over its shrines a man who had shown himself a traitor to the principles or the personnel of our government.

5. Even though the links of brotherhood be interlocked, if they be linked to the heart, if they be locked to this great and worthy Order, to its benevolent operations, yea, though your heart be locked in indissoluble loyalty to the Republic, if your heart be not linked in a covenant of friendship and loyalty to Jesus Christ, all else will count for nought and you will rob yourselves of the choicest blessing and the chiefest honor. Christ is the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely and the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. His love far surpasses woman's. Like Jonathan, he abdicated a throne, one far more glorious than even Solomon's; he received a spear-thrust into his heart so that its poisoned point might not penetrate ours; his love for us causes the faithful friendship of Damon and Pythias to pale into insignificance in comparison, for he actually died that we might have eternal life. The throne which he abdicated to become our Saviour, he offers to share with his friends who have entered into a covenant of loyalty with him and who have come off as conquerors over the powers of darkness. With the links of Friendship, Love and Truth locked to your own heart, link your heart also in a covenant of love and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

"Which of all our friends, to save us,
Could or would have shed their blood?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled to him in God.
This was boundless love indeed.
Jesus is the Friend in need."

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